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Celtic church of Wales

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THE CELTIC CHURCH

OF

WALES.

BY

J. W. WILLIS BUND.

"I offered to show the Bishop that the legend of Lucius was a fable in all the parts of it."

BISHOP BURNET'S *Letters.*

LONDON:
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" —— No foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell ;
Yes, self-abasement paved the way
To villain bonds and despot sway."

BYRON.

PREFACE.

Histories of the Church in the British Isle are so numerous that some good reason is required for adding to the number. That reason is furnished in the fact that nearly all the histories regard the question from the Latin, none from the Celtic, point of view. The publication of the ancient laws of Ireland and Wales, and other documents relating to the early church history of these islands, renders such a survey now possible.

Welsh ecclesiastical history is full of difficulties; it may be that such difficulties are capable of explanation if looked at from the Celtic side. It is generally admitted that the ecclesiastical organization of Ireland and Scotland differed from that of England. It is possible that that of Wales inclined more to Ireland than to England, more to the Celt than to the Latin, and that such a state of things is the key to the explanation of the difficulties connected with Wales.

The following pages are an attempt to regard some of the points of Welsh Church organization from the Celtic side. They do not pretend to be an exhaustive statement of the question, but merely an indication of the

fact that there is another side to the matter as well as the one usually accepted; that there is some evidence to support a view other than the popular one. Whether the evidence proves this view correct is a matter of opinion.

Although the whole question is bordering on the subject of politics more than of history, as far as possible the matter has been dealt with from the historical as opposed to the political side, and no opinion has been given on the present position of ecclesiastical matters in Wales. I have, although a Tory and a Churchman, tried to avoid any expression of my own political views, and to state the case as fairly as possible.

In most places, the actual words in Latin or Welsh of the authorities cited are given, as in a question where so much controversy exists it is dangerous to translate; one or other, or most likely both, of the two parties would object to the inaccuracy or unfairness of the translation. On two points I have specially to ask for indulgence.

(1.) In my ignorance of Welsh, particularly of mediæval Welsh, I can hardly hope to have escaped the pitfalls that every one who tries to deal with Welsh matters, and is not a born Welshman, is exposed to. I have, however, been greatly helped here, and desire to record my obligations to Mr. Vincent Evans, the Secretary of the Cymmrodorion Society.

(2.) In my assurance, I had almost used a stronger term, in venturing to differ from the common opinion

of almost all historians of the church in Wales.[1] All I can say in excuse is that I do not think that the majority of those writers had the evidence of the Welsh and Irish laws before them, and that without the aid of the light those laws furnish, no one would think of departing from the usually received view of the subject. With the light the ancient laws give, all the conclusions on the question require revision.

[1] This book was written and in the printer's hands before I had the advantage of reading either Canon Bright's essays on the Church in these islands, or Mr. Haverfield's paper in the *English Historical Review* for July, 1896.

J. W. W. B.

Wick Episcopi, Worcester,
December, 1896.

THE CELTIC CHURCH IN WALES.

CHAPTER I.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CELTIC CHURCH.

The distinctive features of the Celtic Church, that is of the Christianity professed by the inhabitants of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, before the arrival of Augustine in Kent in 597, have not, in their relation to Wales, received the attention they deserve. The Irish branch of the Celtic Church possesses an extensive literature, especially as to the life and labours of its popularly reputed founder, Patrick. For over two centuries, from the time of Archbishop Ussher to the present day, Irish, British, and Continental writers have written, and still write, elaborate treatises on what they term "the early Irish Church". Scotland has not been so favoured; although various writers have described the Celtic Church of Iona, and the great Saint of its monastery; yet the history of that Church and of that Saint have not been told with the detail bestowed on the story of the Church of Armagh and its Saint.

Of recent years Welshmen have not been slow in the assertion of their past glories, their present importance, their hostility to the Anglican, or, as they prefer to call it, and perhaps rightly, "the alien ecclesiastical establishment" in their country, yet no Welsh writer has taken the trouble to compile a detailed account of the Christianity existing in Wales before the subjugation of the country by the Latin Church. Welsh writers

are content, and it is a disgrace to Welsh historical scholarship that they are content, to allow the Latin version of the history of the early Church in Wales to remain unchallenged and uncontradicted, to admit that the Celtic Church in Wales was for all practical purposes identical with the Latin, that is, with the Christianity and Church government introduced into England by Augustine and Theodore of Tarsus. Such an admission is at once inaccurate and misleading. Inaccurate, as the Christianity of the Celts and that of the Latins was based on ideas diametrically opposed as to the object, the nature, and the mission of a Church. Misleading, as tending to obscure, if not to minimize, the true importance of the struggle between the two churches which was carried on in Wales for centuries, and to represent this struggle as only a contest on some perfectly immaterial ritualistic details, such as the ceremonial at baptism, or the form of tonsure, instead of what it really was, a contest—a vital contest—between tribal Christianity as represented by the Celt, and Imperial Christianity as represented by the Latin. The chief account of this contest is derived from that Saxon monk who hated, with true Saxon hate, the Celt and all his works. In Bede's view it was essential to prove that in this great controversy the Celt was in the wrong. It was also important to depreciate the differences between the Latin and the Celtic Churches, so as if not actually to assert, at least to prepare the way for asserting, the complete supremacy of the Latin over the Celtic Church. This policy, originated by Bede, has been consistently carried out from his time to the present day. The result has been to give us only the story of one side, the victorious side, in the great controversy. If we possessed the story of the other party, the Celts, we should have a very different account of the

early British Church. We should find that the real contest was not on such minor matters as are said by Bede to have formed the subjects of the alleged conference between Augustine and Dinoth, but that the contest was upon much greater issues, on subjects still unsettled—whether the Church is supreme over the State, whether the Clergy are supreme over the Church. The precise form the contest took in this particular instance was the struggle between tribal independence and foreign supremacy, but the principle at issue was whether the Church was supreme over the State.

Whatever was the precise date when Christianity was introduced among the Celts in Wales, Scotland, or Ireland, this Christianity had one characteristic and distinguishing feature. Its development was local, without any external aid, and without the exercise of, or the pressure from, any external authority. Instead of having to live under the paternal care of the Pope, and having its religious rites regulated in accordance with the ideas which prevailed from time to time at Rome, certainly each Celtic community, probably each Celtic tribe, did in matters ecclesiastical what in their own eyes seemed to be right. No central power or authority was in existence able to dictate to them belief in a particular dogma, or to compel their observance of any particular rite or ceremony. In nearly all other parts of Europe the rule—the iron rule—of Rome prevailed. It is therefore impossible to say in what way Christianity would have developed there if left to itself, as any real local development was impossible. It was only among the Celts in the British Isles, and to a slight extent in Brittany, that, from the force of local circumstances, the Latin Church was unable to prevent the development of Christianity in accordance with tribal, as opposed to Imperial ideas.

Viewed from this point, the Celtic Churches of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, provide most interesting subjects for study, as furnishing almost unique examples of the growth of Churches freed from all foreign interference. The study, however, is not without its difficulties. During the centuries of her rule, the Latin Church has striven, and not in vain, to stamp out and to efface every vestige of an earlier Christianity, and a more ancient Church than that set up in Britain by Augustine. On the whole, she has been successful; yet, in spite of her efforts, glimpses are still here and there to be gained of the older order of things, and of the older Christianity. So far as Ireland is concerned, those traces have been worked out with great assiduity, and been made the subject of much learned controversy. They have formed, they still form, the battle-field for the rival faiths that yet contend in Ireland for the mastery. Catholics and Protestants have alike, by their writings, been so anxious to prove their rivals wrong, that historical accuracy has had in some degree to bow to controversial expediency. It is, however, greatly to the credit of Irish writers, both Catholics and Protestants, that the history of the early Celtic Church has, in many cases, it may almost be said in most, been described as it was in fact, not as in the opinion of controversialists it ought to be. Whatever may be their respective views and teaching, we are greatly indebted to the labours of both parties, Catholic as well as Protestant, for their efforts have brought out into clear light the actual state of the Irish Celtic Church. Doubtless, the result is disappointing to ardent patriots and to enthusiastic controversialists, yet the results clearly show what were the Celtic religious institutions, the destruction of which was long the aim, and ultimately the achievement, of the Latin Church.

Although for Scotland less has been done than for Ireland, yet there has been enough to show that the Celtic Church spread from Ireland to Scotland, from Scotland into the North of England; so that slowly but surely the Celtic Church had advanced and was advancing among the heathen Saxons, when the arrival of Augustine in Kent changed the whole position. The issue was at once shifted from a fight between Christianity and Paganism to a fight, a deadly fight, between the Latin and the Celtic Churches. In the North of England the Latin Church was victorious. She forced the Celtic missionaries to retire to Scotland or Ireland, and nominally brought England under the rule of Rome. But in Wales the result was different. Here the Latin Church was repulsed, if not defeated; here Celtic Christianity long maintained its position with its peculiar ideas and exceptional beliefs.

The early history of the Welsh branch of the Celtic Church has been greatly neglected, it might be said, ignored. Most modern writers, when speaking of the early days of Christianity in Wales, are content to say that the subject is involved in hopeless confusion. This is true; but the confusion is worse confounded by the usual endeavour to bring matters into order by trying to explain the rules, the customs, and the acts of the Celtic Church by the light of Latin ideas, and in accordance with Latin modes of thought. At first it seems almost hopeless to get any definite or accurate information on the Welsh branch of the Celtic Church. There is so little that is really reliable; there is so much that has to be rejected or used with extreme caution to avoid falling into the pitfalls which beset the inquirer on every side. So much of what purports to be old is really modern, or comparatively so, that it is often a task of no slight difficulty to say whether any reliable evidence exists in support of

any statement. The difficulties are further increased by two causes, (1) the absurd ideas put forth by fervid Celtic writers, which have been well described in the words of a learned author, "Les prétentions des Celtisants étaient poussées jusqu' au ridicule, de façon qu'antiquités celtiques et fables absurdes étaient à peu près synonymes,"[1] and (2) that many of the sources of information that have come down to us have been edited or revised to a greater or less degree by Latin writers. To such an extent has this been done as to raise doubts whether we possess any really reliable information on the early Welsh Church. In some degree these doubts have been removed by the publication in recent years of various manuscripts and documents, which have enabled some of the sources of the history of the Celtic Church to be studied in a way that was formerly impossible. The comparative method of study that was applied with such success by Sir Henry Maine and others to Jurisprudence can, thanks to these publications, be applied to some extent to Church History. By a comparison of the local customs that existed in Wales with those that existed in Ireland and Scotland, a flood of light is thrown on the early Church. Much that was formerly little better than mere conjecture can now be shown with some certainty to be fact. An attempt is made in these pages to apply this method to certain points of Church history connected with the Welsh Celtic Church. It will be admitted that to some extent there was identity in the views of the Irish and Welsh Churches. There were, it is true, local variations, but, in the main, the beliefs and observances were the same. The Irish records give, with some minuteness, the details of the practice of the Irish Celtic Church on various matters, such as, for instance, the mutual relations existing between

[1] Edwards' *Recherches sur les langues Celtiques*, p. iv.

the Church and the tribe. By the aid of these details, it is possible to fill in a picture of the Celtic Church, and to note many of its peculiar customs and observances. Taking such a picture as a starting-point, and using it to examine Welsh customs and Welsh documents, some outlines of the ideas prevailing in Wales on Church matters may be gained. These ideas will be found to correspond in various details with those prevailing in Ireland; the result will therefore be to show that though not in name, yet in fact, similar customs and observances existed among both Irish and Welsh. It is a fair inference that both had a common origin; that both are the development of the same ideas, modified or affected by their different local surroundings.

Whether Christianity, as has been alleged, came from Ireland to Wales, or, as is much more probable, went from Wales to Ireland, no one can doubt the close religious connection existing between the two countries as early as the fifth century, and very possibly earlier. It was a Welsh Saint Cairnech or Crannach who is said to have been with Patrick at the time of the alleged compilation of the *Senchus Mor*. It was upon a Welshman, Ceredig,[1] that Patrick emptied the vials of his wrath in that epistle which yet survives. It was the fact that an Irish chieftain had a Welsh wife that led to the foundation of the great Monastery of Trim. It was a Welshman who, after Ireland relapsed into Paganism on the death of Patrick, came to the rescue of Christianity, and gave to the Irish Church its form of celebrating Mass. It is therefore only reasonable to conclude that some connection will be found between the distinctive characteristics of the Celtic Churches of Ireland and Wales.

[1] The idea is here adopted that Coroticus was Ceredig, although the weight of modern opinion seems to be against it.

Fortunately for us, Ireland possesses a most remarkable collection of the ancient customs and observances which prevailed there, it is said, as early as the time of Patrick and his followers. What is, if possible, still more fortunate, this collection has come down to us, to a very great extent, far more perfect and far less edited or revised than could have been expected. This collection of customs and observances forms a body of old Irish law, said to have been compiled, or, if not actually compiled, the compilation was begun, before the year 565. This compilation makes up what is known as the *Senchus Mor*. It purports to be a collection of the old heathen laws prevailing in Ireland before "the coming of the faith in the time of Laeghaire, the son of Niall," with such modifications as the conversion of Ireland to Christianity rendered necessary, or, rather, with such modifications as, in the joint opinion of Dubhthach the Druid and Patrick the Saint, were considered to be necessary. "There are many things", it says, "that come into the law of nature that do not come into the written law. Dubhthach showed these to Patrick. What did not disagree with the word of God in the written law and with the consciences of the believers was retained in the Brehon code by the Church and the Poets."[1] This passage recognises as one of the early results of the conversion of Ireland the existence there of a Christian Church under the control of Christian ecclesiastics. In fact, one of the strongest arguments against the alleged date of the *Senchus Mor* is the mention it contains of the great influence and the great endowments of the Church; a state of things to which it is difficult to imagine the Church could have attained at the alleged date of its compilation. To most of us it seems very doubtful if such a state of things could, in the ordinary course of events, have

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls Ed., iii, p. 31.

followed so speedily after the conversion of Ireland from Heathendom. The date of Patrick's death given by the *Annals of Ulster* is 493. Assuming this to be anything like accurate, it is difficult to realise that within the next half century such an ecclesiastical organization as that detailed in the *Senchus Mor*, and more especially that part of it known as the "Corus Bescna", or customary Law, relating to the succession to the headship of the various religious houses, could have been elaborated in such detail as there described. This consideration leads forcibly to the conclusion arrived at by Dr. Todd,[1] that while "it is not impossible that such a work (as the *Senchus Mor*) *may* have been begun in the time of St. Patrick, the *Senchus Mor* in its present form cannot be of so remote an age." But still, Dr. Todd ascribes to the latest portion of it a date not later than the ninth or tenth centuries. The most ancient manuscripts of the Irish laws we now have, are not considered by competent authorities to be of a date earlier than the thirteenth century, but doubtless the rules and principles recorded in those manuscripts are of a far earlier date.

From an historical point of view the importance of the Irish laws consists in the fact that in all probability they record the actual state of things that existed at the time the laws were compiled, and that they are to a great extent free from the chief blemishes of mediæval manuscripts, especially ecclesiastical manuscripts, whether historical or biographical—editing and revising. In early times the manuscripts of a religious house were continually undergoing the process of being re-written or revised by some monkish scribe, desirous of providing his brethren with something at once interesting and profitable for reading at meals. To supply this demand the lives of

[1] *St. Patrick*, 484.

the Saints were constantly subjected to the process of being re-written and edited, additions were made, and omissions supplied to bring the story up to date and make it what, in the opinion of the transcriber, it ought to be. These monkish manuscripts have not therefore the great historical value that might at first sight be ascribed to them. They reflect far more the ideas of the time they were written, of what was then the ideal of what the Saint ought to have been, rather than what he really was. Their real importance consists in their giving us the varying ideals of sanctity at different dates, far more than in the accuracy of the incidents they record. For instance, at the time some of the existing lives of the Welsh Saints were written, the crusading spirit was in full force; so the monkish scribes, like Earl Beaconsfield in his novels, took their heroes to Jerusalem, as it was the right thing for the Saint or hero to do, in the current opinion of the time when the life or the novel was written, quite irrespective of the fact whether the Saint ever left his own country.

Legal manuscripts have this great advantage over others, they did not receive the same treatment from the hand of the monkish scribe. They did not lend themselves to adaptation. They did not therefore receive the care and attention that was given to the lives of the Saints. No monk in the possession of his senses would have ever considered a tract on the native law of distress capable of being idealized into an edifying subject for reading at meals. Distress is one of the great heads of law treated of in the *Senchus Mor*. Thus, legal tracts would be passed over and neglected by monkish writers as serving no useful purpose; still more useless would they be to a mediæval copyist or to a canonist lawyer. There is almost only one thing in which the successive invaders of Ireland

were agreed, to despise the Celts, their laws and customs. Every conqueror has uniformly regarded the Brehon laws in the way they were described by one of Elizabeth's Irish law officers,[1] "as bad in their commencement, bad in their continuance, and the cause of much bloodshed and other evils."[2] The lawyers, both English and Canonist, despised the Brehon laws, and regarded them as a collection of the customs of savages of no real importance, as quite beneath their notice. The clergy, both Roman and English, would alike disregard them, as opposed to the law of God, and containing matters with which it would be as well the people knew nothing. It is true that both the Irish and Welsh laws contain traces that some of the existing manuscripts were transcribed by Latin monks; but it seems, and it is most fortunate for us that it is so, that the transcribers contented themselves with making but a few alterations here and there in matters they considered as of importance to the Church, otherwise they copied without addition or interpolation. Thus the Brehon laws have come down to us in a fairly perfect state, far more perfect than we could have hoped for, considering the perils through which they have passed. It is impossible to overrate the importance of these laws in any account of the Celtic Church. They are, in effect, the chief authorities we possess on the Celtic side of the question. They give us the opinions and ideas of those in authority at the time the laws were compiled, and the system the laws describe in full operation. In studying them, Irish customs and observances are no longer regarded through the eyes of Latin monks. We see what the Irish saw

[1] Sir John Davys.

[2] Davys, *Reports*. Case of Tanistry, at p. 34 *b*. "Ceo fuit (the custom of Tanistry) malueyes en le commencement et malueyes en le continuance car fuit le cause de grand effusion de sang et maults auters mischiefes."

before the importation of Latin ecclesiastics into Ireland.

The Brehon laws therefore give us a means of checking in some degree the assertions of Latin writers as to what were the rites and observances of the Celtic Church, and the manners and customs of the Irish. They are not an account of the Celtic Church, written by an individual friendly to that Church and seeking to make the best of it. They are the rules as stated by the Celts themselves, as to the methods by which the Celtic Church carried on her work among the wild Irish. The most cursory perusal of the Irish laws at once shows that various peculiarities existed in Ireland, peculiarities that a lawyer, trained in the rules of English law, finds it difficult, if not impossible, to explain. In the same way, anyone who has the smallest knowledge of ecclesiastical customs cannot fail to be struck with the peculiarities of many of the customs mentioned or referred to in the Irish laws, and if any attempt is made to explain them, by one who has been trained in the rules of the Latin Church, in accordance with those rules, he will be met with the same difficulties, if not impossibilities, as the English lawyer. The divergence between the two sets of ideas in ecclesiastical matters is most remarkable. It is true, that there are in the Irish laws many things "hard to be understood", and some that are quite unintelligible; yet there are enough remaining that can clearly be made out, and which show plainly that the divergence between the Celtic and Latin Churches was not merely in detail, but in principle. The difference on such points as the independence of the Celtic Church from all foreign control, the position and authority of the abbots and their mode of appointment, the tribal character of the Church as opposed to the Imperial character of the Latin, the effect produced

on it by the law of kinship, the rules which regulate the relation of the tribe of the land and the tribe of the Saint, are all fundamental differences; and it is from the Irish laws, and from them alone, that the information is to be obtained that brings out these matters in their true light, and affords a key to their explanation. Without the Irish laws it would have been impossible to have had any real knowledge on these points, or to have formed any true idea of their operation on the Celtic Church. Unless the state of things these laws disclose is fully realized, no accurate idea can be obtained of the peculiarities and prejudices of the early Celtic Christians—peculiarities and prejudices that helped to mould the character of the Celts and their history.

Like Ireland, Wales possesses a collection of ancient laws, but her laws are very different from the Irish. They do not pretend to possess the high antiquity of the Irish laws, although the text of the earliest existing manuscript of the Welsh laws is about the same date as the earliest extant manuscript of the Irish. But, like the Irish, the existing Welsh manuscripts probably contain the earliest reliable records in existence as to the customs and observances of the Welsh Celtic Church. While enthusiastic Irishmen have claimed that their laws go back to the sixth century at least as the time they were compiled, the most fervid Welshman has never yet claimed for the Welsh laws in their present form a date earlier than the tenth century. It is true Mr. Seebohm[1] thinks that some of the *Leges Wallice* and the *Cyvreithiau Cymru* are, if not of an earlier date, that they may at least record earlier states of opinion than those mentioned in the Codes. Whatever may be the real explanation of this, it must be remembered that the laws of Hywel Dda purport to be a

[1] *The Tribal System in Wales*, p. 66.

compilation of earlier laws. It is exceedingly difficult to say, even by the comparative process, what part of the Welsh laws are of an earlier date than the famous Whitland revision. But the importance of the Welsh laws does not altogether depend on their antiquity, except on the point of distinguishing between Pagan and Christian observances. Their importance lies in this, that they show what, after some centuries of Christianity, were the manners and customs of a nominally Christian people, and what was the position of the Church among that people. If the Irish laws show the effect the conversion of Ireland to Christianity had upon the laws and customs of the converts, the Welsh laws show us how far and in what direction four centuries of Christianity had modified the old heathen ideas of the country. So that to some extent the one supplements the information obtainable from the other.

Between the two sets of laws there is, however, one fundamental difference, and one of extreme importance in judging on the matters disclosed by each in the direction already indicated. In the proper sense of the word, the Irish laws as we have them are not a code of laws at all; they are merely a collection of the opinions of different lawyers on various points that from time to time arose for their consideration. They do not profess to say with authority that this or that should be done or left undone. They point out, by a series of opinions and illustrations, that this or that matter is legal or illegal. A Roman lawyer would have called them "*responsa prudentum*", a digest of opinions for reference or citation, not a code of laws to be obeyed. The Welsh laws, however, purport to be a code in the modern sense of the word,—a body of positive laws, authoritatively pronounced by the supreme power in the state, ordering certain things to be done and prohibit-

ing others from being done. They are thus essentially different from a statement of opinions by the light of which, and by analogy with which, it could be determined what was legal and what illegal. Regarded from this point of view, it is clear that the Irish laws possess a higher antiquity than the Welsh. For historical purposes, and not only from their greater age, but also from their nature, the Irish laws are of more importance than the Welsh. They give a much larger number of examples, and thus throw far more light on the state of society than a simple order to do or to abstain from doing certain acts. But the Welsh laws are more instructive than would be imagined from their form; they are not merely a code of laws, they are also a statement of certain facts; for instance, after stating what the law is, they proceed to state certain matters that may or may not come within the law. They thus give us far more information on the habits and customs of the Welsh than a scientifically drawn code would have done. Like the Irish laws, the Welsh have been transcribed by Norman ecclesiastics or Norman lawyers, or both; and in their copies some attempts have been made to revise the Welsh laws in accordance with their ideas. The result of the revisions has been that in some cases it is quite impossible to say with anything like certainty what was the Welsh law on any particular point, and what have been the subsequent alterations or additions. Yet, in spite of all this, the Welsh laws, on the whole, give the most accurate account of early Wales and early Welsh ideas we now have, and no existing source of information is so valuable or so reliable for the history of the early Christian institutions of that country. A careful examination of the Welsh laws, and a comparison with the Irish, clearly establishes that most of the peculiarities as to the primitive customs of the Irish Celts recorded in

the Irish laws are to be traced in the Welsh. It is true that in the Welsh code we are not expressly told that the old Pagan customs of Wales were subjected to any such revision as took place in Ireland under Dubhthach and Patrick, yet there is a trace of something of the kind. The Dimetian code[1] records that the revision of the Welsh laws by Hwyel Dda was made in the presence of the priests, who were consulted before the code was confirmed. The centuries which separate the dates of the two sets of laws would account for much of the difference in the mode of making the revision. The same idea is, however, carried out in both cases, that the conversion of the country to Christianity rendered necessary not the introduction of new laws, but merely the revision of those in existence. In countries under the rule of the Latin Church, conversion to Christianity has almost invariably meant the establishment of new laws, the introduction of an entirely new system of legal ideas. But the Celtic conversion only meant the revision of the existing systems; the absorption of the old laws, not the substitution of new ones. The importance of this fact from an historical stand-point cannot be overrated; it shows clearly what is really meant by the conversion of Ireland and Wales to Christianity. It was "the engrafting Christianity into the Pagan superstitions, so that the people were won over to the Christian religion before they understood the exact difference between the two systems of belief."[2] It is said by a modern writer[3] that Eastern Christianity is the mixture of the Jewish religion with the ideas of the Persians, and that Western or Latin Christianity is the mixture of the Jewish religion with the Latin ideas as

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, vol. i, p. 341.

[2] *Four Masters*, i, 131.

[3] Froude's *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, 1st series, p. 194.

brought about by Augustine. If this is so, it may be said with equal truth that Celtic Christianity was the dilution of Christianity with Paganism, a mixture in which Paganism largely predominated. It is not, as has been said, that the religion of Wales was Christianity with a veneer of Paganism, it was really Paganism with a veneer of Christianity. The results of this method of introducing Christianity was to accommodate the old tribal system to the new Christianity, a process which led to the existence and continuance of various peculiarities in the Celtic religious system, such as those which arose from the adaptation of the rules which regulated the relations between a chief and his tribesmen. It also brought about the absorption into Christianity of a large amount of Pagan customs, which long survived the nominal abolition of Paganism, and some of which seem to have lingered even to our own times. These causes led to the special peculiarities of the Celtic Church, and it is necessary, if it is desired to find out the explanation of the Celtic ecclesiastical customs and peculiarities, to bear these causes in mind; they will be found far safer guides than those drawn from the Latin Church or Latin customs, as a solution of these peculiarities.

From the Irish laws can be obtained a series of pictures of various matters connected with the Celtic Church; one object of this book is to show how far these pictures can be used to explain the peculiarities and difficulties that exist in the Welsh Celtic Church. The points that have been selected are not in any way exhaustive, and are only instances of these peculiarities. They have been chosen as being characteristic features of the Celtic Church, and showing its great and essential differences from the Latin. Considerable variation will be found between the customs of the Irish and Welsh Churches,

but the variations are what would be expected, having regard to the difference in date of the records, the change of locality, and the altered circumstances. It will be seen that the custom, or peculiarity, has a common origin in both Ireland and Wales. Speaking broadly, except in a recourse to Celtic law, it is impossible to find any really satisfactory explanation of these peculiarities, and of the reasons why the Celts diverged from the Latin ritual and observances. It will be found that Celtic custom is often opposed to modern ideas, both of morality and propriety; but this opposition rather tends to support the view here stated. As nearly all modern religious ideas have been derived from Latin sources, Latin Christianity is naturally looked to in order to furnish an explanation on any matters connected with religion or ritual. In many cases the Latin Church is unable to give any satisfactory explanation; and thus it often happens that the existence of the custom is denied, as forming the best and the easiest solution of the difficulty its existence causes, instead of taking the trouble of ascertaining whether, when Latin Christianity fails to give a reason, Celtic Christianity may not furnish the answer. So persistently is the fact of the existence of the early Celtic Church ignored, that to suggest to many persons who call themselves educated that such a Church existed, would probably bring down the assertion that if it did, nothing was known of it, or that the period of its existence was not one of the periods studied at the schools at which they were brought up, or selected for the examinations they had been called upon to pass.

In any account of the Celtic Church the first great fact to be borne in mind is the mode of conversion of the country to the faith, and the effect that mode had upon the development of the religion. To understand this,

some knowledge of the organization of the Celtic tribes is necessary, and also some knowledge of the general history, both of Ireland and Wales. As a matter of general history the contests between the different branches of the Irish tribe of Hy Niall are, or appear to be, of little importance; as a part of the ecclesiastical history of Ireland they have a very important bearing in showing the spread of the Christian religion, and the local reasons for its extension, or the reverse. So in Wales, the conquests of Cunedda are of little general interest; it does not matter to us what band of robbers from time to time had the upper hand in South Wales. From a religious point of view the invasion of Cunedda is of primary importance, as it probably directly influenced the whole future of the Welsh Church. Without some knowledge of the tribal organization, it is impossible to understand much of the Welsh law and the positions that were occupied by the Chief and the Clergy. It is not too much to say that the organization of the Welsh tribe is the key to the true explanation of the endowments of the Welsh Church, and it is only by its study, the rules that regulated those endowments can be understood. Had the Church modified the tribal organization to any great extent, then any enquiry into the tribal customs would have been of comparatively little importance; but, as the tribe modified the Church, such enquiry becomes all important in any attempt to find out the reasons and causes of such modification. In most European countries, in fact everywhere but in these islands, the rule of the Latin Church has prevailed, and the conversion of a country to Christianity has been followed by the introduction of Latin customs and the establishment of Latin law. Christianity has been the stepping-stone for the civil and canon laws, and the system of government founded on it. Such was the case

among the Celts of Scotland, and, but for local reasons, such would have been the case among the English. In Ireland, Christianity never had that effect, nor was it produced in Wales. On the contrary, in those countries the existing local customs and local laws were not abrogated, but were revised and modified. This modification was greater or less in different parts of the country; it varied according to local circumstances, but throughout the country the result of Christianity was modification not extirpation. The old Pagan rules, which the Irish called the law of nature (an expression not to be confounded with that used either by Roman or by modern jurists), still remained the law of the land, or rather of the tribe. It was only on certain points not considered to be of any great importance by the converted, whatever they might be by the converters, that the Christian law, the law of the letter, was introduced and allowed to supersede the old Pagan law, the law of nature. "Adhesion to Christianity," says Dr. Todd,[1] "was, in a great measure, only the attachment of a clan to its chieftain, and in which usages under a Christian name were of necessity tolerated." The direct result of the changes produced by the conversion to Christianity in tribal life and tribal development, depended mainly upon the personal character of the chief. Had he adopted Christianity from a belief in it, or from a desire to secure against his foe the most powerful supernatural aid there was to be had? It is therefore a matter of great difficulty to say what really was the result of the preaching of Patrick, as instances of both classes are to be found.

One other important feature the tribal system produced; the converts were formed, or formed themselves into a spiritual tribe or clan, the organization of which

[1] *St. Patrick*, p. 503.

was based upon the rules which governed the lay tribe or clan; and these tribal rules became the foundation of the institutions of the Church. The strength and importance of the spiritual tribe probably varied with the superstition or piety of the lay chief, and with the strength and importance of the lay tribe, but whatever was the extent of the change, whether great or small, it was brought about by the Church accepting a subordinate position, and taking as part of her institutions, not her own peculiar organization, but the organization of the local tribe. In other countries, the Church had insisted on her supremacy over the State; here she submitted to become the handmaid, if not the vassal, of the State, or rather, the tribe. The result was that the Celtic clergy were tribesmen first, and churchmen afterwards; they were not always seeking to introduce new laws and new ideas of government, as was the case with the Latin. Many districts and tribes in Ireland refused to admit Christianity on any terms whatever; others only did so to obtain the benefit of the support of what they considered the most powerful Druid against their foes, and thus to gain an advantage for their tribe. When a country is converted, not by individuals but by tribes, each of whom accept the faith on their own understanding of it and for their own purposes, it is obviously impossible to look for any uniformity either in results or in observances. Courses of action, so widely differing in different places and in such varying circumstances, must almost of necessity give rise to local peculiarities, which can only be explained by reference to the organization of the tribe where they arose, and the circumstances under which it became Christian.

These circumstances would be sufficient to account for, and if properly worked out to explain, most of the peculiarities of the Celtic Church; but there is also another

cause that probably led to them. As has been said, the rapid spread of the Christian religion in Ireland when preached by Patrick was mainly due to two causes,—its absorption of heathen ideas, and the personal influence of Patrick himself. Palladius, who had preceded Patrick in preaching Christianity in Ireland, had failed to produce any real results, so far as it is possible now to see; the reason for this failure was that he preached the destruction, not the absorption, of Paganism. Patrick's success was due to his appreciating the virtue of compromise, and to allow, if a belief in God was admitted, the Pagan usages to be carried on under a Christian name. The result of this was called Christianity, and no one can help seeing that its existence depended upon Patrick himself; once his influence was withdrawn, Christianity would probably cease and Paganism revive. If the passages already cited from the *Senchus Mor* as to the mode in which Christianity was introduced into Ireland have any meaning whatever, they show clearly that Patrick went to the outside limits of concession in adopting Pagan customs. Probably Dubhthach was right, at least from his own point of view, when he said that the adoption of Christian customs by a tribe was "the strengthening of Paganism."[1]

If the wild Irish, as we find was the case in some instances, refused even to accept this very slightly modified form of Paganism, it was clear that the conversion of Ireland was more of a name than of a reality. Dr. Todd is probably right when he says,[2] that "had it been the object of Patrick's biographer to chronicle the failures instead of the triumphs of his hero," we should no doubt have had recorded many instances of the refusal of the Irish tribes

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., i, p. 9.
[2] *St. Patrick*, p. 502.

to accept either Patrick or his doctrine. The reason for the refusal of the Irish tribes to accept Christianity at once, brings out the strength and the weakness of the Celtic system. Tirechan, speaking of the chieftains of Ireland in the middle of the seventh century, says,[1] that the chiefs feared that the whole island would be reduced into a *parochia* for Patrick. The result of the failure of Patrick to enforce even nominal conformity during his life throughout Ireland was, that on his death, Ireland relapsed into Paganism, and when Christianity again prevailed, it approached nearer to Paganism than ever, having absorbed still more of the customs and usages of the Pagan tribes.

Another fact to be borne in mind is, that it was from Wales the missionaries came who re-converted the country; and this had its effect on both the Churches, the Irish and Welsh, in bringing them, both in ideas and habits, more into conformity with each other. This intercourse with Ireland caused many a Welsh custom to be introduced into Ireland, and more to retain their position of importance in Wales, with the result that some of the ancient usages of the Welsh Church are not Christian but heathen. It is important to bear this in mind, especially at a time when it is often sought to justify a novelty or a new departure in ritual or worship, on the ground that it is in accordance with the usages or customs of the ancient British Church before she was "corrupted" by Rome. Those who use this argument do not sufficiently remember that many of the old customs and usages of the British Church were not Christian at all, but Pagan; that the usual idea that because a ceremony or observance is believed to have existed in the early Church, it is therefore probably of Apostolic origin, is based upon

[1] *Book of Armagh*, fol. 11, *a*, *b*.

ignoring the existence of the alliance with Paganism through which the Church passed. In all probability, when the usages of the Irish or Welsh Church differ materially from those of other Christian Churches, this arises from the absorption of heathen customs and heathen observances that seemed to be harmless to Dubhthach and to Patrick. Apostolic usage was about the last thing that was considered in either Church.

Most writers either ignore, or pass over as briefly as possible, this relapse into Paganism that took place in Ireland after the death of Patrick. Unfortunately we do not possess any details of the movement, but it was far more extensive than is usually supposed. In what manner the Welsh missionaries were able to win back Ireland to the Christian faith we are ignorant. Some writers[1] are inclined to say that the missionary labours of the Irish Church, which were so remarkable in the fifth and sixth centuries, are due to the fact that on Ireland becoming re-converted, nothing remained for her priest to do there, so they sought for work abroad. Plausible as is this theory, it cannot be accepted, for the reason that there was hardly ever a time in her Church history when Ireland stood in greater need of missionary work than in those centuries. The open apostacy of the Irish, and the feeling that the triumph of the powers of evil was about to be witnessed in that country, may have driven some monks abroad from the idea that there was no longer any work or place for them in Ireland, and so that they had better labour elsewhere. Whatever may have been the real cause, the Irish missionaries to France, Italy, and Germany, showed to the world that, whatever might be its origin, to what a height under favourable circumstances Celtic Christianity could

[1] *Olden Irish Church*, p. 73.

rise, and how much it differed in detail from the Latin Church.

It would be beyond the scope of this book to make, as should be made, an elaborate and exhaustive enquiry as to which of the Celtic customs were of Pagan and which of Christian origin. In all probability, there was a great predominance of Pagan customs. No one seems to have had the feeling that any such preponderance was hurtful. How far the Pagan ideas remained, is illustrated by a legend of Columba,[1] which points to the unreality of the Christian position. In the battle of Cuil-dreimhne, a battle at which Columba was present, and which he is said to have caused by stirring up one branch of the Hy Niall against the other, each side was intent on securing victory, and resorted to every means—prayers, charms, incantations, to obtain it. On each side Druids were engaged, each Druid did his utmost to ensure the defeat of his rival. By the assistance of Columba his Druids began to gain the ascendant, and in a short time their rivals had to confess defeat. To obviate disaster a compromise was agreed upon; and Finnian and his Druids ceased their efforts, admitting the victory of Columba.

This legend brings out the worst side of Celtic Christianity. A saint, out of revenge for an insult, an adverse judgment as to the right of copying a manuscript, not only stirs up civil war, but takes the Pagan's part in the strife, supports the Pagans by his prayers, and sanctions the Pagans in their magical rites. Yet this very unsaintly conduct, "this spiritual fornication," is said by the biographer of Columba to have had such an influence on the god of battles that he granted the victory to the apostate saint. Nothing could show more forcibly the nature of Irish Christianity; it was merely the desire to

[1] O'Donnell, *Vita S. Columbæ*, iii, 3.

obtain the most powerful supernatural aid; if the saint was superior to the Druid they were Christians, if not, they were Pagans.

It must not be imagined that this mixture of Christianity and Paganism which passed as the Celtic Church was confined to Ireland. There are traces of a similar state of things in Wales. The Welsh laws contain much of what is assuredly not of Christian origin; there is not, it is true, the same clear reference to heathen customs as there is in the Irish; but much of what appears to be the ancient law of Wales is not based on ideas that, in the widest possible interpretation, could be called Christian. For instance, the whole of the Welsh law of marriage and divorce could not have been framed by Christians for Christians. It may be said that it is something, that among the wild Welsh tribes there was any law of marriage at all; but that in the tenth century, a body of heathen customs with an occasional allusion to Christianity could be actually passed off as the law of a Christian people, could really have been approved by the Pope as containing nothing contrary to the law of God, is a wonderful instance, if it took place, of what the Court of Rome would allow to be done in her name as long as her power was admitted and her authority unquestioned. It is not usually recognized that these so called Christian Welsh laws, approved by the Pope, contain passages of such a nature, that the Record Commissioners, when publishing them with an English translation, felt obliged for the sake of decency to translate these passages not into English, but into Latin. So hard was it to get rid of Celtic customs that much later, in the time of Anselm, the Archbishop, in writing to Muredachus, King of Ireland, says that in Ireland men exchange their wives for the wives of others, as they might exchange a horse or any other thing.

Next in importance, even if it is of inferior importance, to the consideration of the effects the introduction of Christianity produced, is the consideration of the methods used in introducing it. Among the few things that are undisputed in the history of the Celtic Church, is the mode by which she effected her conquests. That mode was by means of monasteries and monastic institutions. Strictly speaking, the term monastery in its modern sense does not apply to the communities and societies of the early Celtic Church; but such societies are always spoken of as monasteries, and the misuse of the term serves to recall the fact that it was by associated, not by isolated efforts, that the Christian religion was spread in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. To this system of association the Celt was wedded. Association was always the primary idea of the early Celtic teachers. To found a monastery was the chief object of Celtic missionaries, whether at home or abroad. To this the lives of Patrick, the *Senchus Mor*, the lives of the Welsh Saints, all bear witness. Without his religious settlement the Celt was lost. For without some such settlement it was impossible to apply those laws of kinship that lie at the root of all Celtic organizations, both civil and ecclesiastical. The great importance that was attached to monasteries is shewn from the fact of how large a portion of the Irish tract on Customary Law, the *Corus Bescna*, is taken up with provisions and rules on the succession to the Abbacy. No question or dispute could arise as in England as to who was the person entitled to elect—no rival claim of King, or Bishop, or Monks. Every conceivable contingency was provided for by law. At first sight it appears to be strange that such an elaborate series of rules should be made to regulate the election of the obscure head of an obscurer house. But it must be borne in mind that the monastery, however humble,

represented the religious side of the tribe or clan, the tribe of the Saint ; that the headship of that monastery involved the headship of that tribe ; that the extreme care bestowed on the election of the head was, in fact, providing for the continuance of the tribal church.

Viewed in this light, this great care and the elaborate provisions are fully explained. Nor was such care either remarkable or misplaced. The state of Society in early Celtic times made the maintenance of Christianity impossible without some such shelter as was supplied by the monastic settlements. Most of the early churches were situated either in the fort of the tribe, or were fortified. What with Pagan hostility to missionaries, with Druidical anger against those seeking to supplant and deprive them of their rights and privileges, the life of a solitary priest would have been, if possible, in greater danger than was then the life of a stranger, or, than is now, the life of a land-agent in Tipperary or Clare. Their only chance in the struggle for existence was association in some form. Thus, in the early Celtic Church monastic settlements were an absolute necessity for its existence, and their importance when once established became, in the Celtic Church, an article of faith. Wherever the Celtic Church went, whether to Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Brittany, Burgundy, the first idea of the missionaries who carried it was the foundation of a monastic settlement. The idea lingered ; even when the state of things that rendered monastic settlements and monastic teaching necessities had passed away, the Celt still remained loyal to the traditions of the past, and faithful to his monastic establishment. Attempts have been made to explain this loyalty from the Latin side rather than from the Celtic. It is often alleged that the Celtic affection for monasteries is due to St. Martin of Tours and the zeal of the early

Benedictines. This is a good instance of how much may be lost by employing Latin ideas in the solution of Celtic questions. Neither St. Martin of Tours, nor St. Benedict, had anything to do with the matter. It was the recurrence of the same ideas, and the recourse to the same methods under which the Celt had embraced Christianity, and under which alone his Christianity could be practised, that lay at the root of his love for monasteries and kindred institutions. They had been, at first, a necessity for the effectual existence of his religion; therefore, he thought they were always necessary.

Monastic institutions forming so distinctive a feature in the Celtic Church both in Wales and Ireland, it is impossible to give too much attention to them in studying the organization of that Church. In addition to these being the mode in which the principle of kinship was applied to Church organizations, they were, in the state of society that then existed among Celtic peoples, an absolute necessity. Without them it would have been quite impossible for Christianity to have succeeded, or even to have held its own. Christians were obliged to live together for mutual protection. "The state of society," says Dr. Todd,[1] "rendered it practically impossible to maintain the Christian life except under some monastic rule. The will of the Chieftain was law. The clansmen were liable at any time to be called upon to serve upon some wild foray in a quarrel or a feud with which they had personally no concern. The domestic ties were unknown or little respected; no man could call his life, or property, or children, his own. And yet, such is the inconsistency of human nature, the people clung to their chieftain and to their clan with a fidelity and affection which continue to the present day. Hence,

[1] *St. Patrick*, 505.

the spirit of clanship readily transferred itself to the monastery. The Abbot was sometimes also chieftain, or a near relation of the chieftain, and the welfare or progress of the monastic society was identified with the prosperity of the clan." It was these two ideas, protection from danger and kinship, that lay at the base of the Celtic monastic system. At first, it is probable that the monastery was only a name for the Christian settlement, where the converts dwelt with their wives and families. Then came a change; from living with their families the Celts passed to the other extreme, and excluded not only their families but all women. Again there was a change, and a reaction came against this custom; discipline became lax and laxer, until at last the Celtic monasteries had to make way for the Norman Abbeys. Before this came to pass, the Celtic houses had taken a form quite at variance with the ordinary notion of a monastery. At first the house sent out bands of monks who acted as missionaries, and founded monasteries wherever they could induce the local chieftain to allow them to settle for the purpose. These new settlements were all supposed to be connected with the original monastery, the mother-house. Such settlements became, not merely religious, but also formed the nucleus of a lay village. In this way the country was gradually settled and developed by the offshoots from the monasteries. At each settlement, or monastery, there were a certain number of ecclesiastics and their families. A danger subsequently arose that the ecclesiastics should regard these settlements and their belongings as their private property—their hereditary estate. That something of this kind arose is clear from the history of the See of St. David's, which at one time seemed likely to become the private property of the family of Bishop Sulien. To prevent this assertion of hereditary right it would seem

that the very strict rules as to the succession of the heads of the monasteries owe their origin. The original monasteries gradually became the centres of the religious life in their districts, and in time establishments to support and maintain the dignity of their Mother Church. This system was kept together by only one tie, the tie of kinship; this tie united the mother house and its offshoots. In one sense, the tie of kinship was very strong. Based on the clannish Celtic feeling which has always proved so powerful, it yet lacked cohesion in the want of some strong hand to control the whole system. There was no central authority, and the tribal tie did not supply this want. When the heads of the original monasteries became Bishops, and asserted a claim to exercise an authority over a defined district, not as chiefs, nor as relations of the chiefs of the tribe, but as the representative of an Imperial power, the system was doomed. The change in the position of the mother church completely altered the connexion between it and its offshoots. The idea of kinship was supplanted by ideas of allegiance, and it seems probable that the vanity of the Celtic Abbots in trying to place themselves on an equality with the Anglo-Saxon Bishops, led them to claim territorial jurisdiction over the local churches instead of tribal relationship. This led to such a disruption of the old order of things as to render any effective opposition against the Latin Church, when the time came to make it, impossible. The failure of the Celtic system does not, however, lessen the interest in the study of it and its monastic institutions. It was almost, if not quite, the only early church that based its organization upon kinship, and upon that alone. It would be inaccurate to say that this was an attempt to carry out the Christian doctrine of brotherly love; then, as now, kin-

ship by no means necessarily implied affection, and the Celtic doctrine of kinship contained much that would be opposed to natural affection. Still, an attempt to rear up a Church on a heathen basis is a subject that presents very interesting features, and its monastic institutions are by no means the least interesting. It was most unlikely that any such basis would prove permanent, but that does not lessen the interest in it, or the importance of the questions growing out of it.

In addition to the points arising from kinship, there were other peculiarities in the Celtic monastic system which seem to have originated in the laws relating to the tenure of land. The grant of land by the lay tribe, or rather by the chief, as the head of the lay tribe, to the monastery, carried with it certain temporal rights which, prior to the grant, had been vested in and exercised by the chief as the representative of the lay tribe. By analogy these rights were vested, not in the chief ecclesiastic, not in the Bishop when the Abbot developed into this position, but in the head of the tribe who was the successor in descent of the founder, the original grantee. Such a system, of necessity, tended to disruption. It made descent in accordance with certain rules, and there is some evidence that these rules varied in different districts, the sole qualification for the headship of the religious house, the chieftainship of the tribe of the Saint. Such might, and did, often belong to a layman, and even in some rare cases to a woman. If offshoots from the mother house were settled in a district, and grants were made to these offshoots, it seems that these grants would not necessarily enure for the benefit of the mother house, but might remain the property of the house to which they had been made, so that the person who became, by right of succession, the head of the

daughter house would be the person on whom the duties connected with the grant to the daughter house devolved. So it followed that there was of necessity a growing tendency for the daughter houses to become independent, and hence, to sever the tie of kinship which united all the houses together.

It is not a matter for wonder, when the working of these causes is considered, that Celtic monasteries gave way before the well organized forces of the Latin monks. It is, however, a remarkable proof of the strength of tribal feeling in the Celts that, although the system has been dead for centuries, yet customs and habits that are derived from it, and can only be explained by reference to it, are still to be traced in Wales. Thus it is only by reference to the Celtic monastic system that the real nature of the dispute between Llandaff and St. David's over the Teilo churches, or the history of the early succession of Bishops to the Welsh Sees, can be understood and rendered intelligible.

A monastic church in the sense above stated, that is, a series of monastic institutions dotted over the country, founded in analogy with the lay tribe and considered as forming the patrimony of the tribe of the Saint, laboured under the difficulty that it formed a series of separate and independent jurisdictions, over which there was no common superior. The authority of each monastery and its officials was limited to the possessions of the house, or at most, to the territory of the tribe. Over these the officers of the monastery would have jurisdiction, but over nothing else. The organization of such a church, it is obvious, must be essentially different from that of a Church organized on the basis that the whole of the country was under its control, and that it was parcelled out into different divisions, over each of which an official

had supreme authority, an authority derived from a foreign Prince, who claimed to possess the right of nominating these officials as having the supreme right of jurisdiction over the country. It is not necessary to consider on what grounds the claim was based, or whether it was valid or invalid; those are matters quite beside the question; the two systems rested on two different ideas, one, that as the monastery alone had jurisdiction over its territories, so its officials had such jurisdiction as the monastery gave them; there they, and no one else, could interfere. The other, that the only person who had jurisdiction was the nominee of a foreign Sovereign, who claimed supreme power over all the country, and delegated his power in certain defined districts to certain specified persons.

Two systems, so opposed, must of necessity, sooner or later, come into conflict; they are illustrated by the great divergence between the Latin and the Celtic ideas as to Bishops. Both Latin and Celt recognized the three ecclesiastical orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Both Churches had Bishops, but here the similarity ceased. The Celtic and the Latin Bishops were two very distinct personages, both as regards the positions they occupied and the duties they discharged. The position of a Celtic Bishop is clearly brought out by the Irish law. He was not like the Latin Bishop, the spiritual ruler over a defined area. He was not a personage like a mediæval prelate, who claimed and asserted his superiority over the proudest lay Prince. He was not like the Bishop of our own day, the political nominee of the Government for the time being, whom a subservient chapter pretend the Holy Spirit has inspired them to select out of all the Anglican clergy as the fittest for the place. A Celtic Bishop was merely a monastic official, and, very often, not an official

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of the highest rank. As now, it is the fashion to give suffragan Bishops other preferments to make up their salaries, so the Celtic Bishops held with their Episcopal Office some subordinate post in the monastery. When this fact is grasped, that the number of Bishops depended on the number of monasteries, not upon Dioceses—and it is very hard to grasp it, so opposed is it to all our preconceived ideas—it no long appears strange that such early history as we possess of the four modern Welsh sees is of so fragmentary a character. In the annals of the great English monasteries of Westminster, of Reading, of St. Albans, no long accounts are given of the lives and acts of the persons who filled the office of Sub-Prior, nor of the piety and holiness of those who were elected Sacristans. We may get their names, but we get nothing more. When it is remembered that the Celtic Bishop was in the same position as these officers, neither better nor worse, it is not to be wondered at that the records of the early Welsh monasteries are not more communicative as to the lives of the officers of their houses than are the English annals. When it is remembered that the Celtic Bishop was merely a monastic official, often a monastic pluralist, the absence of anything besides a record of the names of the holders of the office is not surprising, in fact, the surprising part of the matter is that the record of names exists. It causes a suspicion as to the genuineness of the lists. It is not easy to say why alone of all the monastic officials, both of those superior and inferior to himself, the names of the Bishops are the only ones we have. A list of names is so easily made out and looks so plausible, that if it was of any importance to have a list, it may be taken for granted that the list would exist. The historians of the Diocese of St. David's, speaking of the Bishops of that see, are obliged to confess "we are

presented with a list of Bishops, but we have nothing beyond their names, neither is their existence proved by any competent authority." [1]

To modern ideas the position of a Bishop as merely a monastic official is so startling, that strong evidence is required to prove that such was really the case. Fortunately here the evidence is clear. It may be said with certainty that of all high ecclesiastical officials in early Celtic times, the Bishops were the most numerous. They literally swarmed. Patrick himself is said to have consecrated not less than 300. The monastic establishment of St. Mochta, at Louth, had 100 Bishops belonging to it. Bishops lived together in groups of seven. The Donegal martyrology refers to six of such groups.[2] Years later, when Ireland had settled down to Christianity, St. Bernard made it the subject of one of his reproaches against the Irish Church, that almost every Church had its Bishop, "Singulæ pene ecclesiæ singulos haberent episcopos." [3]

In Wales, the same state of things prevailed; at the great synod of Llanddewibrefi, no less than 118 Bishops [4] were present, a number which, if they were diocesan Bishops, would be impossible. At the meeting at Whitland to revise the Welsh laws, the number of croziers Bishops and Abbots was seven score,[5] a number out of all proportion with any theory of a diocesan episcopate, and which has led most writers to say it cannot possibly be genuine. But if monastic episcopacy is admitted, then these statements as to Bishops are by no means so incredible.

[1] *Jones and Freeman*, p. 257.
[2] Todd's *St. Patrick*, p. 32.
[3] *De Vita Malachiæ*, cap. x.
[4] Ricemarch, "Life of David," *Cambro-British Saints*, 136.
[5] "Seith ugein baglade yr rog esgyb ac archesgyb ac abadeu."—*Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 621.

On any theory of the Latin Church such a congregation of Bishops as recorded at either of these gatherings is absurd; but from a Celtic point of view it was nothing remarkable or exceptional.

In early Celtic times each church was a monastic establishment and had among its officials a Bishop, just as it had a porter or any other officer. From the state of its organization it was of importance that each settlement, each institution, should be a complete Church, and for this to be so, a Bishop was one of its necessary officers. Such a Bishop had no diocese, no lands, no endowments for his support. The celebrated criticism on Power's statue of the Greek Slave, "a naked woman and nothing more", might well be applied to him; he was a naked Bishop and nothing more. All he had to do was to exercise episcopal functions in his monastery. His position was clearly defined, he was subject to the rule of the Abbot, even if the Abbot was a layman or a woman, as in the case of the Blessed Bridget. But he was subject to no other authority than that of his own Abbot. No Archbishop, even assuming there was such a personage, no Pope, or other potentate had any jurisdiction over him. He was independent of any authority outside his own monastery.

If the Bishop occupied what to modern ideas was an anomalous position, the Celtic clergy were in the same state. As to their condition the Irish and Welsh laws are most instructive, and that, not only as to what they say, but also as to what they leave unsaid. The idea of the Latin Church that the clergy were superior to the laity, that they formed a class by themselves with exclusive rights and exceptional privileges, seems never to have entered the Celtic mind. The Irish laws expressly state that the clergy have not any exclusive claim or privilege by virtue of their position as clergy, but that the relationship

which subsisted between them and the people was a mutual relationship. "The people," says the *Corus Bescna*, "have a right in the Church, and the Church in the people";[1] and when stating that the right of the Church was to firstlings, first fruits, and tithes, it adds that the right of the laity was to demand in return for their payments various spiritual functions. "They demand",[2] says the *Senchus Mor*, "their right from the Church, that is, baptism and communion, and requiem of the soul, and offerings are due from every Church to every person after his proper belief, with the recital of the Word of God to all who listen to it and keep it." This passage clearly shews one of the characteristic differences between the Latin and the Celtic Churches. In the Latin, the priest had a discretion in the administration of the Sacraments to anyone; he was the judge whether or not the applicant was a fit and proper person to be a recipient. In the Celtic Church there was no such discretion vested in the priest. Each member of the tribe was entitled, because he was a member of the tribe, not on account of holiness, not on account of conduct, but on account of his being a tribesman, to the services of the priest of the tribe, and to any advantages arising from such services, one of which was to have the Sacraments of the Church administered to him. Until he lost his privileges as a tribesman he could demand as a matter of right his privileges from the priest. At first it may seem to us that such rights are opposed to all religious notions. But we have even now in the Anglican Church what may be a trace of the same kind of idea. It has been solemnly decided by the highest ecclesiastical court of the realm that any person who is a parishioner of a parish has, because he is a parishioner, an absolute right to receive the sacrament in his parish

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 33. [2] *Ibid.*

church, and can only be refused this right on the two grounds mentioned in an Act of Parliament.[1] Exactly the same state of things prevailed in the Celtic Church, only, so far as is known, there the right was absolute, and there were no exceptions. The two also differ in this,—the Celtic right is a personal one, being member of a tribe; the Anglican is a local one, being the parishioner of a parish. Among the Celts, the rights of the Church and the rights of the tribe were strictly mutual rights. "The people had a right in the Church, and the Church in the people." So completely were these two rights dependent, that it was considered to be necessary for a tribe to have a church attached to it. No real Irish tribe, it was said, could exist, that is, legally exist, without the two branches, the tribe of the Saint, and the tribe of the Land. "It is no tribe without three free dignitaries, the Church, the Land, the Poet."[2] The same idea existed in Wales; by the Welsh law it is laid down, "There are three universalities for a country, an Army, a Court, and a Church."[3]

Next to the clergy came the Church. As might be expected among the Celtic churches, many curious and interesting peculiarities are to be found; and here again the monastic settlements are the only safe ground to work upon. It is a matter of uncertainty when Wales and Ireland were really divided into parishes, and how it was done. It may well be that while the division was only gradually established, it was much later in date than is usually supposed. Whenever the division took place, it is probable that it had but little real effect on the ecclesiastical organization of the country, as the original

[1] 1 Edward VI, chap. i, s. 8. *See* Jenkins *v.* Cook, Law Reports, 1 P. D. 80.

[2] MS. Brit. Mus., Nero, A vii.

[3] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 781.

division of the country was based on very different considerations—on monasteries, not upon parishes. The country was parcelled out among the different religious establishments. The churches were divided into groups, and, to a particular monastery a particular group of churches would belong, irrespective of situation. Thus the Teilo churches belonged to Llandaff, and probably the Dewi churches to St. David's.

As the Latin Church grew stronger, and the Celtic weaker, the Latin divisions began to gain ground; but the parishes were made after the churches were built, and this will account in some measure for the extraordinary difference in size in Welsh parishes. The lands of the tribe were divided among the different groups of churches. It followed that, in the immediate neighbourhood of the churches, the parishes would be small, while the outlying places would have to take care of themselves, and the churches were probably allowed to help themselves, as they liked, to whatever was undivided at the time. In the Celtic organization everything was done in groups—groups of settlements, groups of churches, and groups of Bishops. It is difficult to say how the tribe land was divided among the groups of tribal churches that belonged to it, but it is tolerably certain that by some process, probably by a gradual one, certain lands became associated with particular churches. The lands so associated, when the Latin Church came in, and the church was made territorial rather than personal, were held to belong to that church, and became her property for the support of her clergy, and at last these districts came to represent the territory of each church, and were utilized in forming a parish which consisted of the territory of each church, either with or without additions.

In Ireland there is not any mention of parishes before

the introduction of Latin Christianity. In Wales, certain passages in the Welsh laws are relied upon for showing that parishes existed in the tenth century. This matter will be dealt with more fully hereafter; all that need be said now is, that the evidence is not strong enough to bear out so important a conclusion. As it is alleged that the parish did not exist generally in Wales as an ecclesiastical division till about the fourteenth century, what, it may be asked, was the system that prevailed up to that time? The answer is obvious; the remains of the old religious system before the establishment of Latin monasteries. This is clear from passages from *Pope Nicholas' Valor*. Three several priests are mentioned as serving in one church, a state of things wholly opposed to the Latin ecclesiastical system, and which can only be accounted for as a survival of the past.[1] Latin Bishops holding Welsh sees were too much engaged in securing their hold upon their dioceses by establishing Latin monks as garrisons for the Church, to trouble themselves greatly about "the inferior clergy, the priests and deacons." As long as there were revenues that could be appropriated when necessary, or churches that could be given as provisions for their favourites, the Latin Bishops of Welsh sees were not particular whether the work of the Church was carried on by a tribal or by a parochial clergy. The importance of the change subdividing Wales into parishes was, that when it was accomplished, all the English laws and rules as to parishes, the rights of the incumbent, the powers given by law to parish officers, applied to Wales. These were rights and powers that probably the Welsh had never heard of, and which only indirectly, by the extension of the parochial system, were applied to their country. The

[1] *Pope Nicholas' Valor*, Record Ed., p. 286.

effect of the legislation of Henry VIII, extending to Wales the then existing laws that prevailed in England, and providing that all laws passed for England should apply to Wales, had, from the division of the country into parishes, so far as related to Church matters, a wider and more far-reaching effect than any direct legislation upon the matter.

As has been said, Welsh churches were in groups, and these groups often consisted of churches of different ranks. A good deal of information as to the Celtic Church has been obscured, if not lost sight of, by the fact that the one term Church has been used for translating all the different Welsh names, each of which implied some distinction in the position and character of the church. The precise distinction between the different terms for church has long been, to Welsh antiquaries, one of the great puzzles connected with the Celtic Church, and the puzzle has been made all the greater by trying, as has been invariably the case, to find the meaning of the Celtic terms from Latin customs or usages. It is hardly necessary to say that the result has been confusion worse confounded. Better success may be hoped for in trying, by the aid of the different terms for churches in the Irish laws, to ascertain the meaning of the Welsh names. The Irish division was obviously based on the organization of the tribe of the Saint which followed the organization of the tribe of the land, and it is most probable that kinship and tribal ideas also formed the basis from which the Welsh churches derived their classification and their names.

Next to the question of church, the thorny question of their endowment has to be considered. No point in the history of the Celtic Church is of greater interest than that of the way the early Celtic churches were supported.

In the Anglican Church the endowments are the remains of what the Latin Church secured as her property from the so-called piety of Princes, in making grants and enforcing the ideas of the Pope and of the Latin Clergy. But the Celtic Church, being free from Papal rule, and all its ideas and principles being based on tribal organization and kinship, the rules and the reason for endowment differed widely from those of the Latin Church. It is true that in a passage in the *Senchus Mor* the rights of the clergy are stated to be "first-fruits, firstlings, and tithes"; but tithes are probably an interpolation; for if the *Senchus Mor* is of anything like the date usually ascribed to it, tithes as a fixed legal payment to the clergy were then unknown in Ireland. The *Senchus Mor* is said to be a compilation of the sixth century. The first general introduction of tithes into Ireland appears to have been made at the Council of Cashel, in 1172. One of the charges St. Bernard made against the Irish Church was the irregular way in which tithes were paid, and the Pope made the same complaint in his celebrated bull. It seems fairly certain that the compulsory payment of tithes in Ireland was one of the marks of the subjugation of the country to the Latin Church, and was not a Celtic mode of sustaining the clergy. The same was also the case in Wales; as far as tithes are concerned, they are mentioned in Hwyel Dda's laws, not as a payment to the clergy but to the King, and it was not until a much later date that the Welsh clergy received any tithes as a compulsory form of legal payment for their support. The other heads of ecclesiastical endowment—firstlings and first-fruits—stand on a very different footing. As practised in Ireland, they form a class of endowment peculiar to the Celtic Church, as no other Church ever claimed under these heads such rights as were not only

put forward, but enforced, by the Irish Celtic clergy. It was not only a claim to first-fruits and firstlings, as those terms are now understood, it was also a claim to "every tenth birth with a lot between every two sevens, with his lawful share of his family inheritance."[1] This claim was made and enforced against all families of the tribe; none escaped, whether members of the family of the chief or of the serf. It is said by some writers,[2] that one of the effects of enforcing this right was to fill the Irish monasteries to overflowing, and so to cause the great outburst of missionary zeal of the seventh and eighth centuries.

It is most doubtful if the Welsh clergy were ever in the general receipt of tithes as a source of maintenance as was the case in England. The Celtic Church in Wales was originally supported by the produce of the lands which formed the possessions of the tribe of the Saint. When the old tribal system was broken up and each Church became independent, a greater or lesser part of the tribe lands fell to its share. Even at the present day, in many parts of Wales, the revenue of the different benefices is largely derived, not from tithes, but from glebe. The Welsh church possessed large endowments, but these endowments consisted far more of rent than of tithe. This will be seen from the *Liber Landavensis*, a record compiled about 1130, purporting to contain an account of all the gifts to the great monastery of Llandaff. It recites charter after charter from the earliest time; there are plenty of gifts of lands, villages, rents, all kinds of rights and privileges, but no tithes. Had the Welsh Church of that day had any property in tithe, it is impossible to think that in some way or another there would not be some allusion to them in the record. Its silence is the

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls Ed., iii, 11.
[2] *Olden Irish Church*, 73.

strongest possible evidence that the Welsh Church of that day was not a tithe-owner. The Welsh Church became entitled to rents and other annual payments, but their origin was totally distinct from the origin of tithes, and possesses a curious history of its own, a history that is very characteristic of the peculiarities of the Celtic Church.

No account, however fragmentary, of the Celtic Church should fail to notice one of the most characteristic features, the extraordinary number of its Saints. Ireland has been called the Isle of Saints, and there was probably a time when it must have been a distinction not to be a Saint. To use an Irish description, "as many as the leaves on the trees are the Saints that are therein". According to the Latin use of the term, the mere fact of the existence of such a number is an abuse of the word, and this was the way the Bollandists treated the Irish Saints when they came to deal with them in the *Acta Sanctorum*. During the early years of the Welsh Church, the Welsh were fairly liberal in the way of calling persons Saints. The total number of Welsh Saints is between 400 and 500, but after the beginning of the eighth century the number of Welsh Saints suddenly collapsed, and from that date the addition to the list only numbered some four. The Irish originally applied the term Saint to every Christian, just as we apply the term Reverend to every clergyman. In Wales, it seems that the term Saint was restricted to those persons who were members of the religious tribe, without any regard to holiness of life. There were also three great families, many of the members of which were designated as Saints—that of Caw for North Wales, Brychan for Mid-Wales, and Cunedda for South Wales. If the tables given by Rees in his *Welsh Saints* have any approach to accuracy, most of the Welsh

Saints traced their descent from one or other of these three chiefs. The result well illustrates the different views held by the Celt and Latin on the subject. In Ireland all Christians were Saints; in Wales the descendants of certain families were Saints; in Rome the nominees of the Pope, and no other persons, were Saints; in the Latin Church the term Saint is a title of honour—in the opinion of devout Catholics, the highest honour to which a mortal man could attain, and to show this fact the term was almost always prefixed to the name of the person. Among the Celts it was no special distinction to be a Saint; a man was not thought more of because he was of one family or stock of descent than if he was of another. So the term ceased to have any particular honour attached to it, and, in consequence, was not used. The different views as to the qualification for Saintship in the two churches, bring out in marked contrast the different ways in which the two Churches regarded religious matters.

The points above mentioned as illustrating the characteristics of the Celtic Church, and showing clearly her fundamental divergencies from the Latin, are not in any way put forward as exhaustive, or even as those of the highest importance. They have rather been selected as bringing out most clearly the divergence of the two Churches, the Latin and the Celt, and the identity between the two Churches of Wales and Ireland. It is true that in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, great differences will be found to exist, or to have existed, in the way the religious idea was worked out. But in spite of these differences the main principle was, in each case, the same, that the tribe, tribal life, and tribal custom, formed the basis of the local Church. As tribal customs varied, and that they varied greatly in Wales the three codes of Hwyel Dda's laws clearly show, so the religious customs also

varied. Yet, in spite of the variation, the leading idea was the same. Variations are what would, under the circumstances, be naturally expected to be met with. A central authority that could have prescribed what observances were to prevail might have obviated them, but the want of this central authority is one of the chief characteristics of the Celtic Church. The country was split into independent tribes that owned no common superior; the Church was split into independent monasteries, which owned no common head. The civil chaos that prevailed in Ireland and Wales till the Norman Conquest was exactly reproduced by the ecclesiastical chaos that prevailed until the triumph of the Latin Church.

That triumph was mainly brought about by these very causes: the united Latin Church found the disunited Welsh an easy conquest in appearance, although from the day of the Conquest until now, the disgust of the Welsh at the loss of their greatest national institution has never been forgotten or forgiven. Yet the Welsh have only themselves to thank for the catastrophe. The Welsh Abbots gradually imitated the Saxon Bishops, and endeavoured to become what the Saxon Bishops purported to be, great feudal lords, not content with being tribal prelates. Their attempts at becoming the equals of the Saxon Bishops led the Welsh Abbots to forget the different nature of the positions, the opposite ideas that prevailed as to their rights and duties. In their desire to be great men they made up to the Latin Bishops, and prepared the way for their own ruin. For the Welsh Church really passed into Latin hands, not so much by conquest, as by the voluntary surrender of her sons. There was treachery—there always is in Welsh matters—but the treachery was not designed. It was ambition, not betrayal, that caused the ruin of the Welsh Church.

It was probably the best thing that could have happened, both for the sake of the country and for the sake of the Church, that the Latin triumphed over the Celtic Church. Still it is impossible to avoid regret at seeing a Church that did so much for these Islands succumb to an alien body. But the time had come for a change. The Celtic Church could no longer continue to do her work, for the simple reason, her work was done. What was required, both in Ireland and Wales, was not a collection of independent tribes, each with an independent Church, but the strong hand of an Imperial ruler, a central authority in Church and State, that knew what was right, and had the courage to enforce it. In Church matters, Ireland found this strong hand in the rule of the Pope, and in consequence became, and has continued to be, the most loyal and faithful daughter of the Latin communion. Unfortunately, in matters of State she did not find the same strong hand, and the result has been, and continues to be, what it always must when the executive Government is weak and afraid to do its duty, Anarchy. In Wales, the results were exactly transposed. She found a strong central power in the State, a strong hand to enforce law and order in temporal matters, and she became, and for years continued to be, the most orderly and peaceful country ruled over by the British Crown. In ecclesiastical matters the strong hand of the Pope was replaced by the feeble hand of the Anglican establishment, a rule at once corrupt, weak, and possessing no real authority. So that instead of Wales becoming happy and contented, instead of her having a strong church—because a national church; for want of a competent central authority she has been allowed to drift out of the hands of the Anglican Bishops until she has passed under the sway of numberless sects, and into the power of countless schisms.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRIBAL SYSTEM.

As the Tribal System of the Celts not only formed the basis of all their organizations, both in Church and State, but was one of the great causes of the differences between their Church and the Latin, it is necessary, in order to understand the story of the conversion of the country to the Celtic Church, to have a clear idea as to what such system really was. It must not be thought that the Celtic tribal system was anything peculiar to the Celts. So far as research has yet gone, the main features of that tribal system were the same among all Aryan peoples. There was infinite variety in the details of tribal society arising from local circumstances, but the structure of the tribe remained the same, whether it dwelt in these islands, on the continent of Europe, or in the wilds of Asia. The real peculiarity among the Celts was, that they dealt with Christianity as if it had been any other tribal custom. Each tribe had its own religious rites, though some were of a most debased kind; yet none of these rites were, or claimed to be, of universal application. On the contrary, they were the peculiar, the hereditary, property of each particular tribe. A contest between rival tribes usually involved the question whether the gods of the one tribe or the other were most powerful, and the conquered tribe had to admit the supremacy of, if not to adopt, the gods of the conquerors.

The Latin missionaries taught not merely the superiority of the Christian religion over the religion of the particular

tribe to which the missionary was preaching, but its superiority over all other religions whatever. They claimed, in fact, universal spiritual dominion for their creed,—a claim which was quite opposed to the then existing ideas of the Celtic tribes, and probably went further than the views of any other religious system. For some cause this doctrine of universal dominion, if it was preached to, was not accepted by the Celts in these islands. It may be that from their isolated position their horizon was limited, and they failed to grasp the theory of a world-wide religion. It may be that the early preachers of Christianity to this country, not coming direct from Rome, not filled with the idea of the universal dominion of Rome, the "*imperium sine fine*", considered that the acceptance of the fact of Christianity was all that they required, and rested satisfied with that. In any event this was, in most cases, all they obtained. Among the Celts, therefore, Christianity took the place of the local religion of the converted tribe, whatever that particular form of paganism may have been, and did not, at first, aspire to anything more. The position, therefore, was on one hand the local religion of certain tribes, on the other what professed to be a new religion, but which was opposed by another form of the same religion, which claimed not to be the possession or privilege of any tribe or people but of all mankind. The position is exactly stated by Cicero when he urges the claim of one universal law; there were not to be different laws in each country or district, one at one place and one at another, but his ideal was one law for all nations and countries wherever they were, and under whatever rule they lived.[1]

[1] "Non erit alia lex Romæ alia Athenis alia nunc, alia posthac sed et omnes gentes et omni tempore una lex et sempiterna et immortalis continebit."—Cicero, *Fragmen de Repub.*

The two ideas could not fail to come into conflict. In order to understand the struggle, it is necessary to know something of the organization of the tribe, so as to realize how its religion was interwoven into its system.

Although the structure of the Celtic tribe in its main features is the same wherever it is met with, yet there are infinite varieties of detail, not merely between the Irish and Welsh, and the Welsh and Scotch tribes, but also among the different tribes that peopled Ireland and those which occupied Wales. These diversities in Wales seem to have been increased, by the fact that from time to time incursions were made either by Irish, or Scotch, or other invaders into Wales. In their final form the details of Welsh tribal life were a mixture from various sources, and it would be hard to say what parts were really imported, and what derived from the old inhabitants of the country.

The Celtic tribes were groups of families united by blood relationship. To a great extent they were free from Roman influences, but the limits of this freedom is a matter that is open to question. This was more the case in Ireland than in Wales, for the Welsh laws contain greater traces of Roman institutions and ideas than the Irish. Nor is this surprising. The wonder is not that traces of Rome are to be found in the Welsh laws, but that the traces are not much more general, having regard to the Roman occupation of Wales. This is, however, probably accounted for by the fact that on or about the date of the close of the Roman occupation of the country Wales was over-run by a horde of Picts or Northmen, who swept away what then existed or remained of Roman institutions, and introduced their own customs and habits. The conquest of Wales, by Cunedda and his sons, has probably had more effect in shaping Welsh customs and

ideas than is usually recognized. Between the beginning of the fifth century and the middle of the sixth, from 400 to 560, a movement took place which has had the most far-reaching results in Wales. It is usually said that to Wales the ancient British fled for refuge from the Romans and the Saxons, and that it is to Wales recourse must be had for the knowledge of the native British and their customs. But while this procedure would be in accordance with the natural order of things it would prove fruitless. For, in fact, it was not the case that Wales was peopled with the native British tribes; Wales became the battle ground of two rival Celtic races, both of whom were strangers to the land. Most of the west of Wales was occupied by the Gwyddel or Irish immigrants, the Cymry being confined to the east, and forming a line separating the Gwyddel from the Saxons. "A line drawn from Conway on the north to Swansea in the south would separate the two races of the Gwyddyl and the Cymry on the west and on the east. In North Wales the Cymry possessed Powys, with the Gwyddyl in Gwynned, and Mona, or Anglesea. In South Wales the Cymry possessed Gwent and Morganwg, with the Gwyddyl in Dyfed—Brecon being occupied by the mysterious Brychan and his family."[1] These three groups, the original inhabitants, the Northmen, and the Irish immigrants, had various differences in their systems and organizations, and probably in their religions. It took a long time to fuse into one whole these three discordant elements, even if the fusion was ever brought about. The modern idea of an old Welsh nation comprising all the tribes of Wales, each of these three races would have eagerly repudiated. It is necessary to bear in mind this divergence in the ideas and habits of the different races in Wales, as it led to important results.

[1] Skene, *Ancient Books of Wales*, vol. i, p. 43.

If Nennius is to be relied upon, there were settlements of Scotti or Picts in different parts of Dimetia or South Wales before the invasion of Cunedda,[1] and it is one of the difficulties in Welsh history to determine whether these settlements were vestiges of the original inhabitants or deposits from the various hostile invasions of the country. About 400, or a little later, an invasion of Wales from the north took place, the Scotti were driven out of Dyfed, Gower, and Kedgueli, by Cunedda "*et a filiis ejus.*" In the Welsh genealogies it is usually said that Cunedda had eight sons. In the *Genealogia* in Nennius is added that they came "*de parte sinistrali id est de regione quæ vocatur Manau Guotodin.*"[2] It may well be that the so-called sons were not actual children, but the chieftains of the tribes Cunedda, or even the tribesmen, brought with him and over which he claimed sovereignity. The result of the invasion was that Cunedda and his sons established themselves in South and West Wales, sweeping all before them. There never appears to have been any rally of the then inhabitants from this invasion. So that it is probable that the traces of tribal customs and ideas now to be met with in Wales, at least such as are found in the Dimetian code, are those introduced into the country by Cunedda and his sons, rather than those that were then already in existence, that is, that they are more Pictish than Cymric. What the latter were it is hard to say, as it is very doubtful if anything of an earlier date than Cunedda's invasion has survived to us. The importance of this consideration will be felt when considering the descriptions of the Latin writers as to the habits and

[1] "Filii autem Lietham obtinuerunt in regione Dimetorum et in aliis regionibus id est Guir et Cetgueli donec expulsi sunt a Cuneda et a filiis ejus ab omnibus Brittanicis regionibus."—Nennius, *Hist. Brit.*, § 14.

[2] Nennius' *Historia Britonum*, § 62.

customs of the early inhabitants of Wales. It is obvious that they cannot be taken as an accurate description of the habits and customs of the inhabitants of Wales after Cunedda's invasion. It is doubtful if the Romans ever came into such close contact with the Picts, except in the way of fighting, as to be able to give any reliable account of their customs or habits, and it is to the Picts, not to the Cymry, we have to look for such habits and customs as existed among the peoples of South and West Wales. So that the descriptions of Cæsar and Tacitus should not be pressed too far, and accepted as accounts of what the customs of the peoples we have to deal with were. There is the further question as to the extent of Ninian's labours among the Picts, how far he converted them, and how far they relapsed into Paganism; and also there may be a question whether Cunedda was a Pagan or Christian; and even if it is assumed that he was a Christian, and that Christianity had an existence in Wales before his invasion, whether the result of his conquests was not either to efface all traces of Christianity, or, at least, of the original Christianity of the Welsh, and bring in that of the Picts? It must also be remembered that, to a great extent, Brychan and Cunedda represented different races, different tribes, different ideas, different religious rites, and different sets of Saints.

The key to a good deal of early Welsh history lies in these divisions of the country, and their great importance is to be seen in the fact that when the Welsh laws began to pass from the point of oral tradition to that of writing, the country was so divided into groups of tribes that three separate codes were necessary. The variations in these codes are often regarded as not of any great importance; but this is not so, for they represent and perpetuate the fact that, although in their main features their codes

were very similar, yet in details the customs of the Welsh tribes differed widely, and these differences were most probably the result of the diverse origin of the peoples who were subject to the Venedotian, Dimetian, and Gwentian codes, and it is from these sources we have to find out who and what the different peoples were. Unless the effects due to the invasion of Cunedda, the influence of Brychan, and the influence of Irish settlers, are clearly recognized and kept in mind, it is impossible to properly understand either the tribal history or the early ecclesiastical history of Wales. To each of these causes, variations both in the tribal and ecclesiastical organization are to be attributed. The ecclesiastical question will be subsequently dealt with; the effect on the tribal system of these different elements has now to be considered.

Its great importance can hardly be overestimated. The basis of the Welsh, and of most, if not all, Celtic tribal systems was blood relationship. In Wales the tie of blood relationship seems to have been more relied on than elsewhere. The communities were composed of actual or reputed relations, all related, in a very near degree, by a real descent from a common ancestor, that is, the heads of the different households which made up the community, whether tribe, village, or family, were all closely related to each other. If a man did not come within the prescribed limit of relationship he did not belong to the community, but was a stranger; and, as a stranger, he was *primâ facie* an enemy, and therefore a person to be knocked on the head at the earliest possible opportunity. "The stranger", says Sir H. Maine, "was an enemy to be slain, or spoiled, or hated, as much as the wild beasts upon which the tribe made war, as belonging indeed to the craftiest and cruellest order of wild animals,

It would scarcely be too strong an assertion that the dogs which followed the camp had more in common with it than the tribesman of an alien and unrelated tribe."[1] Bearing this in mind, some faint idea can be formed of the condition of Wales divided up into the territories of fierce and hostile tribes and communities. Each retained its own ideas, customs, and peculiarities; each regarded its neighbour's belongings with contempt, or rather, with hatred; each was ready to fight its neighbour at any moment and on the smallest provocation. Relationship was, in these early societies, everything. One of the marks or tests of relationship was community of religion, the right to participate in the same religious ceremonies, to commemorate the same ancestor. So one effect that the tribal system had on Christianity was that each tribe that adopted it endeavoured to retain it for its own exclusive use. To admit its neighbour to participate in its religious rites was to admit the existence of some relationship or tie between them. Such an admission was a mark of subjection to which the pride of race, the honour of the ancestor, or the rivalry of adjoining communities, would never submit. If a rival tribesman became a Christian, he did not, in Celtic opinion, become a brother, or possessed of the same religion. To prevent his doing so, the Christianity of the one tribe was purposely made to differ from that of another. It would have been an outrage to the ancestors of a tribe to admit that persons other than their descendants could share in their worship; and if the same form of Christianity had been adopted by each tribe, they would be doing precisely what in their belief was most objectionable. Therefore, if for no other reason, diversities in religious rites and customs arose, their object being to enable the tribes to have the advantages of

[1] *Early Institutions*, p. 65.

the wondrous miraculous power possessed, or supposed to be possessed, by the Saint or missionary, without having or practising the same religion which was held and practised by their hated neighbours. What extent of difference was necessary to enable it to be said that one Christian tribe did not practise the same religious rites as another, is very hard to say ; but it may be taken that the variations were more in ritual than in creed, in ceremony than in faith. We know so little of the early Celtic Christians, that it is difficult to say anything certain as to their religious observances, but there are indications that between the tribes when converted there was considerable rivalry. How far this acted on their religion is not clear, but it must have had some bearing on the matter; and it may well be that the differences and rivalries were really the results, not of variations in the Christianity they received, but in the amount of the old Paganism they retained. This would tend to create very great distinctions, and form a ground for saying that different tribes did not possess the same religion, nor practise the same rites.

In all of the Celtic tribes the tie of kinship, or blood relationship, was the one which held them together. In the Welsh, as far as we know, this tie was closer than in the Irish ; that is, in the Welsh the kinship was more a matter of fact, in the Irish more a matter of faith. In the Welsh, all the heads of the households were, at first, actual blood relations ; in the Irish, they were relations in theory, but the precise degree had become more difficult to state. This is but saying, in other words, that the period at which our records of the Welsh tribes begin, disclose an earlier phase in point of development, not necessarily in point of time, than the Irish. For, gradually, in the Welsh, as well as in the Irish, the relationship became a matter of tribal faith embodied in

the legends that were preserved as the records of the tribe. But, whether in fact or in theory, whether real or traditional, this idea of blood relationship,—of all tribesmen being descended from a common ancestor, and so actually related,—formed the basis upon which Celtic society rested, and the only system on which it was organized. The connection of the tribe with the land came at a later date; at first the tribe was nomadic, "a band of brothers" in a literal sense, wandering about the country where they pleased, and as they pleased. It is most probable that many of the so-called incursions that are recorded in early Welsh history are merely the movements of the tribes in their wanderings, before they definitely settled down within fixed limits and on a defined tract of country that ultimately became regarded as their own territory.

Both in Wales and in Ireland the earliest records take us back to a time when, at least, some of the tribes, probably the most important, had certainly become fixed dwellers on the territory on which they were settled, and to which there was some vague idea of boundaries, and which was regarded as the property of the tribe. Soon after this stage was reached, an entirely new set of ideas arose. Up till this time the tie that had held the tribe together was merely blood relationship, and, as a consequence of it, community of religious rites; a relation had a right to the aid and help of relations to protect himself against outside enemies, and all the tribesmen would protect the memory of their ancestor, as a matter of duty and conscience. These rights were, however, merely personal, simply protective rights. But when the tribe became the owners of territory a great change took place; a definite area of land became the property of the tribe, how was it to be dealt with? The answer was, that as it belonged to the tribe and to the tribe alone, only

the tribesmen would be allowed to use it, to turn out their cattle on it; and later each household obtained a right to take from it a crop for its own use, when this crop had been taken, the land cropped reverted to the common stock. It by no means followed that the same part of the territory was cultivated each year. For the present the great point was, that only tribesmen, that is, relations, could have anything to do with the land. At first, the tie that bound the tribe together was the duty of blood relations to defend each other, and the memory of the common ancestor. Next, the tie became more of a defensive nature,—the duty of those who were entrusted with a tract of land to unite for common defence. So it came to pass that upon blood relationship other links were forged —mutual protection and mutual rights. This new idea of mutual protection very soon entered most forcibly into tribal development, and almost eclipsed the original idea of the tie of blood relationship being the basis of tribal society. The tribe was to a great extent re-organised upon these new ideas, which played the most important part in the later tribal development. But still the old idea of blood relationship was never entirely effaced; it always, in name, continued to form the chief feature, but no longer the exclusive feature, of the tribal organization. To be entitled to tribal rights, that is, the rights arising from and connected with the tribal land, a man must be a tribesman: he could be a tribesman if he was, in fact or in theory, descended from the common ancestor, in other words, a blood relation by birth, or one who had become a blood relation by some recognized means, and so a member of the tribe. These means were usually, if not a religious ceremony, at least based on religious ideas.

It is at this point that the great difficulties of the

subject begin. Are the artificial modes of becoming a tribesman, of recognition as a descendant from the common ancestor, part of the original Celtic ideas, or do they arise from one or other of the two great influences that have so modified and transformed all the early ideas of tribal society? Is the artificial extension of the tribe only a trace of the Roman idea of the family as developed by adoption, or is it the Christian idea developed by the religious notion of the spiritual relationship of all Christians? Is the tribal idea of development merely an adaptation of the Roman theory of adoption, or the Christian idea of baptism? It is very difficult to give any satisfactory answer to these questions; probably the Christian notion is moulded on the Roman idea of family, for no one who has ever read any old Roman lawyer, such as Gaius and his account of the ceremony of adoption, but may be trusted to name the sources from which a large part of the Christian, or rather the Pauline, doctrine of baptism, and its effects is taken. But whether the notion of incorporating a stranger into a tribe or family is an original notion among the Celts, or is due to the influence of Rome, or of Christianity, or both, is a much wider and more difficult question. For the present purpose, and one on which here no definite conclusions need be expressed, the great importance of the matter is the recognition of the fact that a process, a religious process, existed before the conversion of the Celts to Christianity, whereby persons not blood relations could be placed in the position of blood relations, and be admitted to be members of the tribe. It was this idea which the Christian missionaries utilized so much in building up the Church under the name of the "Tribe of the Saint". The more the subject is considered the closer the resemblance will be found between the different ways in which strangers were

allowed to become members of the tribe of the land, and of the tribe of the saint.

It is a matter of no little difficulty to trace the steps in the development of this idea of artificial expansion of the tribe. As Sir Henry Maine points out, the Celtic tribe originally was not a tribe in our sense of the term in its extended meaning, nor the modern family, or group or groups of descendants from a living ancestor, but the "Sept". It is a body of kinsmen whose progenitor is no longer living, but whose descent from him is a reality, and neither a myth nor a fiction.[1] This, he states, is nearly identical with the Indian "joint undivided family" of the present day, who are joint in food, joint in worship, and joint in estate, who formed that assemblage of persons who would have joined in the sacrifice at the funeral of some common ancestor, if he had died in their lifetime. If this is, as it seems to be, a correct definition of the Celtic tribe, the story of its development becomes a history of the way by which persons who were not descendants of the common ancestor could qualify themselves to become such. Probably the process was a gradual one. It is clear that in comparatively early times there was some form of ceremony by which the child of a woman of the tribe by a man, not a tribesman, could be admitted into the tribe; that is, that the tie of agnatic relationship could be relaxed for the benefit of the tribe. When once this relaxation was allowed, it was only a matter of time to organize the admission of other strangers. Then came Christianity, teaching the doctrine that all men were capable of admission into the tribe of the saint, as all, being the children of God, were agnatic relations. So, as a religious ceremony (baptism) being all that was required for the one, a religious ceremony would suffice for the other.

[1] *Early Institutions*, p. 105.

The effect of Christianity was, therefore, to enlarge the ideas of the Celt as to the lay tribe, by the mode it applied to the admission of members to the tribe of the saint.

It is therefore necessary to consider what were the means and what the conditions under which persons who were not tribesmen could become such. The first instance in which it appears that the rules were relaxed was in the interest of the tribe itself, in the case of the children of the women of the tribe. A woman does not seem to have been generally capable of being admitted to tribal rights herself, yet she could transmit to her children the capability of becoming tribesmen. As the rule of agnatic relationship prevailed, the children of a woman by a man who was not a tribesman were strangers, and no relations to the tribe. It seems, at first sight, that this is obviously a fragment of Roman law incorporated into the Welsh codes, but on further consideration it is by no means so clear that it is so. The position of women among the Celts was rather that of chattels than of persons possessing rights. It would be a loss to the tribe—to its fighting power—if the sons of the women of the tribe were not made in some way capable of being admitted to it, while it would be a gain to the hostile tribe to which the father belonged if that tribe could claim them. So, probably, to protect themselves, and to weaken their enemies, the rule was adopted that the children of a woman of the tribe could be admitted to it; and although it resembles the old Roman rule, it is far from clear it is derived from it. More likely it was based on the principle of self-preservation. The rule is thus stated in the Venedotian code.[1] "According to the men of Gwynedd, a woman is not to have tribal rights (*ny dyly Gwreic trev tat*), for two rights are not to centre in the same person,

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 175.

those are the tribal rights of the husband and her own; and since she is not to have tribal rights she is not to be given in marriage except where her sons can obtain tribal rights, and if she be given, her sons are to have tribal rights through the mother." Here the rule and the reason for the rule is stated. The same person is not to have two sets of religious obligations, those to the ancestor of the father and of the mother. If the woman transmitted tribal rights this would be the case. She has, therefore, no right of transmission as long as she keeps in the tribe, but once she goes outside the tribe, then, that the tribe may not be a sufferer and lose so many able-bodied men, she can with certain exceptions give her sons the right to become members of the family to which she belongs. The exceptions are curious and bear out the view here stated. The first is when she is allowed to marry a stranger (*alltud*), here the sons would not belong to the tribe, but their rights are reserved; as it was probably regarded as a breach of tribal duty, the tribesmen allowing the women to marry a stranger. But this dereliction from duty was not to prejudice the tribe, or, it may be that the woman was not a free agent, and that the tribe disposed of her as they would of any other chattel for their own advantage; they could not to gain a private advantage, do away with or affect the rights of the tribe. The second case was where the woman was violated by a stranger, and had a son in consequence; the son was not to lose his right to be admitted to his mother's tribe. Here the same rule would prevail as in the first case, or perhaps the further rule, that as she was not, or rather the tribe were not, consenting parties, there was no change in the woman's position or rights, or in those of the tribe. The third case was where a woman was given as a hostage, and while she was a hostage she had a son by a stranger.

At the first glance this again looks like a fragment of the Roman law of postliminium, but here again it was probably not so; the woman was only given for a specific purpose by the tribe, and probably for their advantage; they could not, by this, prejudice or affect the rights of the tribe, so here her children were allowed to come into the mother's tribe if they pleased. If the woman voluntarily gave herself up to a stranger, she could transmit no rights to her children.[1] In the former case it was by an involuntary act of the woman, her children were not born into tribal rights, so the law protected those rights; but when the woman of her own free will abandoned her tribe and went to a stranger she became as if she was dead, and had severed for ever all her rights with the tribe in which she was born. It must be always borne in mind, in considering this matter, what the rights the mother transmitted were; they were not the right of inheritance, not the right to become the owner of any specific property, but merely the right to be admitted into the tribe, to become a member of a certain community. It is true that the fact of membership conferred certain consequential rights; it is equally true that membership involved certain duties, and might or might not be an advantage. It will be also noticed that the right to be admitted to the tribe did not turn at all on the question of legitimacy—it belonged equally to a legitimate or an illegitimate son; and this goes to show that the custom is probably earlier than the contact either with Roman law or with the Latin Church. The question of legitimacy or illegitimacy of birth, in or out of wedlock, so far as the right to be admitted a tribesman went, seems never to have troubled the early Celts. All they looked at was the fact of paternity, not the circumstances of it. Such a state of things goes to

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 177.

prove that it existed certainly before Christian teaching, probably before the influence of Roman Law.

This seems to have been the first step in the relaxation of the tribal rule allowing certain of the children of a woman of the tribe to have the same right of admission to the tribe as if their father had been a tribesman.

The next extension was made in analogy to this, and is one of the instances of that remarkable system which gained such a hold on the minds of the Celts, and especially of the Irish Celts—fosterage.

In the *Senchus Mor* it is stated that therein were promulgated the four laws, the first of which is said to be the law of fosterage,[1] and which law forms the subject of one of the tracts of Irish law.[2] In Wales, fosterage was used as a means by which persons who were strangers to a tribe could be qualified to be admitted to it. "If," says the Dimetian Code,[3] "a serf (*taeog*) takes the son of a freeman (*breyr*) to foster with the King's permission, such a foster-son is to participate in the inheritance of the serf, like one of his own sons." Thus it appears that fosterage, so far as succession to property went, placed the fostered child in the same position as the natural child, in fact, the family of the serf included all children, whether natural or fostered. This is further shown from a passage in the *Cyvreithiau Cymru*,[4] which, although of much later date, yet goes to prove how deeply the tie of fosterage had become engrained in the Welsh mind. "Is there," it is asked, "any person who is entitled to come into possession of land without rights transmitted by the father (*daduys*), or by the mother (*mumuys*), and without investiture by a lord? There is. If a serf takes the son of a freeman (*breyr*) to foster with the consent of his lord,

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i, 41.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii, 147.
[3] *Ibid.*, i, 543.
[4] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 303.

that son shall be a co-participator in the inheritance of the serf like one of his own sons"; thus recognizing that the tie of fosterage placed the fostered child in the same position as birth, no distinction being drawn between the fostered child and the natural child. On a serf becoming emancipated, he and his children would become eligible for admission into the tribe, and there appears to have been no distinction drawn between children born and children fostered; so that by means of fosterage, in rather a roundabout way, the child of a stranger became eligible to become a member of a tribe.

Although fosterage does not seem to have taken so great a hold on the Welsh as it did on the Irish, yet in one respect the tie created by fosterage seems to have been in Wales more lasting than it was in Ireland. Among the Irish the relation usually terminated when the foster child was of an age to be admitted as a tribesman; with the Welsh the relationship seems to have endured for life. The Welsh law gave the foster son a right of succession to his foster father, but the foster father could not succeed to the son as he was a stranger, and the foster-son a tribesman's child, so the property went to the tribesman or to the tribe. The importance of fosterage as a means of enlarging the tribe lies chiefly in the fact that it gave prominence to a series of artificial relationships, which rose up with Christianity, and which had a remarkable effect in the development of the Church. In all probability, fosterage formed the origin of sponsorship, which was an ecclesiastical adoption of the system, and the tie that was created between the godfather and godchild closely resembled, in many respects, the tie between the foster parent and his foster child. Sir Henry Maine points out that when persons "are placed in a relation which they are taught to consider especially sacred, not

only their words and ideas, but their feelings, emotions, and prejudices, mould themselves on the pattern of those which naturally result from consanguinity."[1] Thus, as fosterage developed on the lines of natural parentage, so sponsorhood developed on the lines of fosterage or adoption. Probably the tie that bound the godparents to their godchildren in the fierce struggle between Christianity and Paganism, did much to keep together the tribe of the Saint, and was used for extending the Saint's tribe, just as fosterage was used for extending the lay tribe. A still further development of the system of fosterage was found in that remarkable relation between teacher and pupil known as literary fosterage. As the ordinary fosterage created the relationship of father and son, so did literary fosterage, among both the Welsh and Irish, create the relation of teacher and pupil. The teacher did not found a school, in our sense of the term, but he became the father of a family, and the relations that bound the pupils to the teacher very closely resembled the ties of the natural relationship of parent and child. This fact had a most important bearing on the Welsh monastic movement; the idea of literary fosterage was the idea which bound the members of the monastery together, and was probably one of the causes that rendered the organization of the Celtic monasteries in Wales so different from that of the Latins. Probably nothing tended more than this to animate and keep alive that tribal feeling which has left so deep a mark on the Celtic Church.

Another way of extending the tribe that should be noticed appears to be later in date than either of those already mentioned; for want of a better name it may be called "prescription", as it was based on the lapse of time giving the title to acquire tribal rights. The first mode

[1] *Early Institutions*, 239.

was by residence in Wales for a fixed period. A stranger who dwelt in Wales attained to the privileges and rights of a born Welshman at the end of the ninth generation.[1] That is, after nine generations of his people had resided in Wales a stranger was qualified to be admitted to the tribe. But if for four generations the stranger had married a pure bred Welsh woman, and his descendants had lived in Wales, then the time was shortened to four generations.[2] "The descent and privileges of a born Welshman is to be obtained by the fourth descendant of a stranger's issue by legitimate marriages with born Welsh women." Both these provisions are only in the later Welsh laws, and are certainly the result of the relaxation of the original tribal theory and mark the extent of the change. It had become an accepted fact that strangers could be admitted, and a new restriction became necessary on which this idea is based, the principle of guarding against traitors being admitted to the tribe. A man was not to be considered worthy of trust until for nine generations he and his father had proved their fidelity to the Welsh tribe. But if a man was descended from the tribe on the mother's side for four consecutive generations, he had become so nearly a tribesman that he might then be trusted to be admitted into it at an earlier date.

These were the main modes in which a person not a descendant of the common ancestor might become entitled to be treated as a theoretical descendant. It will be noticed that with the one exception of the length of residence, that either in fact, by allowing succession through females, or in theory, by counting artificial relationship as real relationship, the old tribal idea, that there must be blood relationship to be a member of the tribe, is retained. Everything was based on that, and

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 505. [2] *Ibid.*, ii, 505.

followed from it. If a man was a descendant, he was competent to apply for admission into the tribe, but unless he was, the gate was fastened against him, and could not possibly be opened. In her dealings with the Celts, the Church took up the same position. The missionary and his companions formed a family descended from a common ancestor, the Deity, to whom only members of the family could sacrifice, only those who believed in Him were qualified to apply for admission into the tribe, and the belief was cultivated by sponsorship. As in the lay tribe, the rigid test of early days was probably relaxed and admission made easier, but always the qualification for admission, blood relationship as proved by descent, was retained.

When a person was duly qualified to be admitted to the tribe, the next thing, before he become entitled to the full rights of a tribesman—to be the head of a household, to receive a share in the tribal land, to be kept by the chief, if necessary—was to gain admission into the tribe, and this ceremony seems to have been performed by an officer known as the "chief of the kindred." The first step on the boy attaining fourteen was for his mother to prove whose son he was. This was done when the tribe became Christian in church; the mother swearing on the tribal relics in the tribal church that a particular tribesman was the father of her son.[1] Before the conversion of the tribe to Christianity this ceremony seems to have been done before the priest, and to have been more or less a kind of incantation. This may be inferred from the words of the oath. A woman, when pregnant, who desired to swear her child to a particular man, had to take an oath before the priest retaining some traces of the old heathen ceremony. "May I be delivered of a snake by this preg-

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 207.

nancy, if any father has begotten it on a mother than that man" (naming him).[1] Having established the paternity, the parties went before the chief of the kindred, and the other heads of households, and the chief of the kindred "takes the hands of the child between his own hands and gives him a kiss, for a kiss is a sign of relationship, and then places the right hand of the child in the hand of the oldest of the other men, who is also to give him a kiss, and so from hand to hand until the last man."[2] Upon this ceremony being performed the person to be admitted became a full tribesman, entitled to all the rights, and liable to all the obligations of the position. The principal obligations were, liability to military service when called upon by the chief, and liability to contribute to the support of the chief. On the tribesman's death, his property, having become tribal property, passed to the chief, not to his relations. The liability to military service did not mean any definite service, but was a liability to serve whenever the chief required it, whether for purpose of offence or defence. The liability as to the support of the chief will be discussed later. The right to succession by the chief shows how complete was the severance of all outside relationship. In return for these obligations, the new tribesman had certain rights; the most important of which were, the right to have a house in the tribal settlement (the privilege of *raith*), the right to an allotment of tribal land (five free *erws*), the right to be supplied with cattle by the chief from the common herd of the tribe, the right to be kept in food by the chief, and the right of bearing arms. The *Cyvreithiau Cymru*[3] thus states the rights: "Three original privileges of every native of Wales, the grant and fruit of five free *erws*, under the privilege of his origin as a born Welshman . . . the privilege of

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 785. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 214. [3] *Ibid.*, ii, 503.

bearing defensive arms with their emblems, the privilege of *raith* under the protection of his chief of kindred." The question as to the right of food from the chief will be dealt with later.

It is important to note one very significant difference between the rights and duties of the tribesman and the rights and duties of lord and vassal in feudal times. All feudal rights sprang from the idea of holding land or something in the nature of land. The tribal idea was that the tribesman did not hold from anyone; he became, as one of the tribe, entitled to a share in the tribal property. It was quite possible that as time went on, the rights based on relationship and the rights based on tenure should become confused; but it is important to keep the distinction in mind, because it had an influence on church development. Among the Latins the right to an advowson belonged to the owner of the land, and it was held of him by tenure precisely in the same way as any other hereditament. But in the Celtic Church it was not so. The occupant of a benefice possessed it in whole or in part as a portion of his share in the tribal property; he owned no superior, no master, no patron. It was his share in the tribal property as being one of the tribe of the Saint. And it followed that if the tribal property was not divided, all tribesmen would be entitled to share in it, so that in the cases which are met with in Welsh history, where the number of vicars or rectors of a church are numerous, it is merely a case of the persons having been admitted, as they were entitled to be, members of the tribe of the Saint, with the result of such admission being a right in the common property of the tribe to which all were entitled until a separate allotment was made to each. In default of it being made, each of the tribesmen became entitled to retain his share in the whole of the tribal property, what-

ever might have been the number of the tribesmen and the amount or nature of the property. It was no case of portionist rector, or other Latin idea, it was merely the result of the admission of a tribesman into the tribe.

The liability of the tribesman to contribute to the support of the lord, and the right of the tribesman to be maintained by his lord, open up one of the distinctive features of the Welsh church, and one which deserves great consideration. The chief was entitled to receive from his tribesmen a supply of food for the support of himself and his household; to this supply each of the households of the tribe had to contribute. At first, they contributed in kind, and the payment made in kind was actually used for the support of the chief and his followers; whether this payment was at all times throughout the year, or only on certain occasions, is not quite clear. It is not necessary now to deal with the details of the contribution, but it seems that each tribesman in his turn was bound to make his contribution in kind. In return for this, the chief had to keep open house, as it would now be called; he was bound to feed the tribesmen. They had a right to be supported at his hands, in so far as feeding at his table went. It also seems that they were entitled to specific gifts of food for their support. This idea of the obligation of the chieftain to support the tribesmen was one of the last survivals of the tribal system; the idea has hardly yet died out, and it was carried on in Scotland by the chiefs of the clans up to the changes that were brought about by the suppression of the rebellion in 1745, or even later. In the course of time the supply, by the tribesmen to the chief, of food, like all the other obligations of the same kind, became commuted into a money payment; but it does not appear that

the supply of food by the chief to the tribesmen became so commuted, at all events, if it was, it was only partially so, and it also continued to be made in kind. These payments to the chief, instead of supplying food, became a regular part of the chieftain's revenue. This rule of the lay tribe was applied also to the tribe of the Saint, and the members of that tribe first gave food, and then gave money, to the chief of their tribe for his support. The effect of this on the endowments of the Welsh Church will be treated in its place; here, it is only necessary to mention that the head of the tribe of the Saint became entitled, not to a supply of food, but to a fixed sum in money for his support, and was bound in his turn to support the tribesmen, an obligation traces of which have lingered on until the present day. When in time the Bishop became head of the tribe of the Saint, he took over the compositions of food in kind, and also took over the obligation to provide for the members of the tribe of the Saint. The bearing this part of the reciprocal duties of chief and tribesman had on the Welsh church will be considered when discussing the endowments of the church. Here it is enough to point out that this feature in the tribal organization has had very far reaching effects, and has formed an important distinction between the Celtic and Latin Churches. The Celtic idea, based on the tribal relation, being, that the duty of the tribesmen is to keep the chief, and of the chief to keep the tribesmen; the Latin idea is based on the supposed scriptural obligation of all Christians to support the clergy, but the Latins had no idea of the corresponding duty of the Bishop to keep the clergy, and the members of the tribe.

The development of the tribe must be looked at from another point of view. When once the Celtic tribe became territorial owners, the development proceeded on two great

lines:—(1) The gradual recognition that portions of the common property of the tribe can become the property of the individual tribesman. The rules and customs as to this, the conditions on which it became separate property, varied in each tribe, but the history of all the tribes is the same, the gradual recognition of private property. In some tribes this does not occur until a very late date, in others it took place earlier; but whether early or late, the history of all tribal societies proceeds in the same direction, and is the history of the change from collective to private ownership. (2) The relaxation of the rules as to the composition of the tribe, the introduction of greater facilities for strangers to become members of the tribe, was aided by the fact that persons were needed to assist in cultivating the tribal land.

Tribal history is the record of the relaxation of the rules of common descent and common property. The differences that are found are mainly the local differences that the development of these ideas had to contend with, the devices by which the substance of the old form was retained, and yet the spirit was evaded. In some cases the obstinacy or the conservative instinct of some group of men may have delayed the change, and caused the introduction of special means of escaping the difficulties that arose from time to time; but the whole system, although in many cases retaining its original forms and theories in name, had passed in fact, after the tribe became landowners, into a new set of ideas.

The history of the development of the tribe is reflected in the history of the word used for the tribe. In Irish, the word translated "tribe", which was its original meaning, was "*fine*"; this word in course of time came to express, besides the tribe, a collection of families related by blood,—then any groups of families, however

sub-divided, and, ultimately, even the family itself.[1] The Irish idea being that the term "*fine*" expressed blood-relationship, and that this was the same whether the relationship existed between the members of a family, or between one or more families forming a group, or between one or more groups forming a tribe. In each and every case the principle was the same—blood relationship, and that principle was expressed by the word "*fine*", the meaning of which varied as the notions of the Irish as to the tribe were extended. But it still retained its old idea of blood-relationship, and when the Christian missionaries were forming their colonies, the word that was applied to this, the Christian colony, was the same, the tribe of the Saint, the "*fine mynach*" thus marking the principle that the organization of the Christian community, the tribe of the Saint, was based upon the same ideas as the tribe of the land. To a great extent a like state of things is found in Wales. The word used to express relationship is "*cenedyl*"—kindred, and the term has come to signify not merely the relationship between individuals and between the members of a particular family, but also the connection between the group of families that form a tribe, and the group of tribes. It does not, however, in Wales appear to have been applied to the religious tribe, but is confined to the lay tribes.

The laws as to the "*fine*" and the "*cenedyl*" fell into the two great groups already mentioned: first, laws as to the personal rights and disabilities of the members of the tribe—what modern lawyers would call questions of status; and, secondly, laws as to the rights and liabilities of tribesmen and the property of the tribe. The laws and rules as to the first class of questions are as a rule prior in

[1] *Early Institutions*, 90.

date to those of the second. To this, however, the rule as to a common name borne by all the families of the tribe, forms an exception, except in so far as the tribe perpetuated the name of the reputed common ancestor of all the families composing the tribe.

Thus the title, "the sons of Cunedda", most probably represented either one tribal name that originally included all the families and tribes that claimed Cunedda as their common ancestor, or else was a name including all the different tribes that composed the forces Cunedda led to the conquest of Wales. Gradually, as the tribes developed, and among the Welsh tribes by the operation of that singular system of the four generations, new names, probably taken from the head of some successful family, would occur; such as "the sons of Ceredig", which term would become the tribal name of certain families who were originally part of the old tribe, but broke off and formed new settlements and tribes. It is not the least of the peculiarities of the Welsh tribes, that they, so to speak, shed their ancestors at certain times, and formed new combinations. Many early societies carried on from generation to generation the idea or the tradition of descent from a common ancestor. The Welsh did not do this to anything like the same extent as other peoples. At the end of every fourth generation the Welsh re-considered the question of family relationships. Whether this re-consideration went to the extent of re-considering all tribal relationships is not clear; probably the new groups of families would still maintain they had a common ancestor with all the other tribal families, and might bear in a modified form the old tribal name.

Any alteration of, or modification in, the tribal name, is of more importance than at first sight appears, and

for these reasons. It is fairly certain that the name derived from the chief, the personal name, is of much higher antiquity, and points to a much earlier settlement, than the name derived from the land, this last being only acquired when the tribe became stationary, and possessed of land. The former would prevail while the tribe was still a wandering body without a local habitation, the latter would only be acquired when the tribe had settled down. "The sons of Cunedda" is probably a far older designation than "The men of Arvon."

The second reason for its importance is on account of the inscriptions on the early sepulchral monuments. Usually the inscription is, "To ———, the son of ———": this has been regarded as merely the name of the parent. It is far more probably the name of the tribe; and, if so, then these inscriptions furnish some evidence on which to act in localizing the territories of the early Welsh tribes. It is also of interest, having regard to the usually received rule that when a place and a family have the same name, the place gave its name to the family. This rule did not apply to Wales, for there more often the family gave its name to the place. For instance, Ceredigion is the settlement of the sons of Ceredig, not Ceredigion a place after which the tribe was named.

So far the tribe has been regarded as bound together either by the tie of kinship or by that of joint ownership of the land, but there were other subsidiary links which united the tribesmen. One of these was the right of the tribe to receive payment if any offence was committed against a member of the tribe, and the liability of the tribe to make payment in respect of torts done by any of its members. Whenever a crime was committed, and by crime is meant an act of violence or theft, then, as now, the first question was, who committed it? But this was

not to ascertain who was to be punished for the crime, but on whom rested the liability to make good the injury. The original idea was that the family or tribe of the injured individual could take summary vengeance on the wrong doer for a crime. One of the lines of tribal development is the history of the steps that converted the vengeance on the individual, from a foray by the injured tribesman and his relations upon the criminal's family, into a payment to the tribe to which the injured man belonged.

This was a most gradual process, and the tribe had become comparatively civilized when it was fixed in what cases of tort the tribe was liable to pay, and in what cases and on whose account the tribe was entitled to be paid. The settlement of these points led to the making an elaborate system of rules, defining to what tribe or family, whether that of the father or of the mother, a child should belong, as upon the decision of this question the liability to pay, or the right to receive, usually turned. A large part of the Welsh laws is devoted to the rules for the decisions of these questions, which were questions which could only be decided by the tribe, and the necessity for the solution of these questions required it to be clearly known who were and who were not the members of a tribe. This probably made it the duty of certain of the officers of the tribe to have the information always at hand by which such a point could be at once decided—that is, to preserve the oral tradition that showed who were and who were not tribesmen. The officer to whom the obligation was intrusted was usually "the chief of the kindred", one of whose duties it was to know the tribal legends and histories. This duty made his existence a necessity for each tribe, who, from the information he could give, could say at once who were and who were not its tribesmen, and when the tribe

should pay or should receive compensation for torts; so it is stated in the Welsh laws that one of the three indispensables of a tribe is the chief of kindred.[1] Having settled when the tribe was liable to pay or to make compensation, it became necessary for the tribe to possess an officer by whom the demand might be made or resisted, in other words to have a mouthpiece.

This necessity was fully recognized by the Welsh tribes, for it is stated in the *Cyvreithiau Cymru* that there were three indispensables for a tribe (*cenedl*), a chief, an avenger, a representative (*ei phencenedl, ei dialwr, ai theisbantyle*). Their respective duties are thus defined:—"A chief of kindred is to be the oldest efficient man in the kindred to the ninth descent, and his privilege and office are to move the country and court on behalf of his man, and he is the speaker of his kindred in the conventional *raith*, of country and federate country, and it is the duty of every man of the kindred to listen to him and for him to listen to his man";[2] he is, therefore, the spokesman of the tribe —the person who states its opinions and decisions, in fact, its mouthpiece. The avenger's duties are executive, "He leads the tribe to battle and to war, as there may be occasion. He pursues evildoers, brings them before the court, and punishes them according to the sentence of the court and judgment of the country." The remaining officer, the representative of the tribe, "is the mediating man in court, and in congregation, and in combat, and in every foreign affair he is to be one of the wise men of the tribe by *raith* of chiefs of households in the tribe, and to be the coadjutor with the chief of the kindred in every *raith* and convention of the country, and he is to be elected by the *raith* of his tribe to the ninth descent by ballot, that is by tacit vote."[3]

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 517. [2] *Ibid.*, 517. [3] *Ibid.*, 519.

These three officers made up the tribal officials. It has been seen already how the chief of the kindred had to act in cases of the admission of tribesmen; together they made up the body by which the tribe claimed, enforced, and administered its rights.

It is important to remember the difference between the chief of the kindred and the chief of the tribe. The chief of the kindred was the head of a particular number of families, or of a village or villages, but he was not the head of the tribe. The chief of the kindred was a survival of the time when the structure of the tribe was based on religious and personal ties alone, before any question of the ownership of land came in. After that was the case, the structure of the tribe was altered by new rules and new ideas arising from land; as land grew in importance and mere questions of status declined, questions arising as to the land had to be decided. These came before the same persons as the old questions of status—the different heads of the village households, one of whom, the chief of the kindred, presided over an assembly of the others. In the *Cyfreithiau Cymru* it is said that Hywel permitted every chief to whom there might belong a *cymwd* or *cantref* or more, that is, every chief that was over more than one tribe or set of families, "to hold a daily royal court of privileged officers, in number as he should deem proper in a similar manner to himself, and privilege to hold a court of pleas in his country among his *uchelwrs*, and he permitted every *uchelwr* to hold his own land according to its privilege, and to rule his bondmen according to conditional bondage in South Wales and perpetual bondage in Gwynedd, . . . and likewise he allowed to anyone without land or office the natural privilege he was born with."[1] It

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 365.

will be seen that this is ascribed to Hywel, but in all probability it existed long before, although he may have recognized and regulated the right. The question then arises, What was the position of the chief, or, as he is more usually called, king? The Welsh codes give a list of the officers that made up the court of the king. These were sixteen in number,[1] and among them were the chief of the household (*penteulu*), the priest of the household (*effeiryat teylu*), and the bard of the household (*bart teulu*). These are the only officers who are spoken of in connection with the term household (*teulu*) in any of the three codes, and it is not an unfair inference that they are in another form the three indispensables—the chief of the kindred, the avenger of the kindred, and the representative of the kindred—transferred from their places as officers of the group of families, or the village, to the chieftain's court as representing there the officers of the groups of families or villages.

The next thing to be noticed is how very soon these offices about the chieftain's court became hereditary. At first it seems, from the passage already cited, that the chief of the kindred was elected from out of the persons who stood nearest to the common ancestor; then the office, probably from some family claiming that they were the nearest in blood to the ancestor, was held successively by members of that family until it began to be regarded as the hereditary property of such family. So much was this the case that in order to prevent it there is the following provision in the Gwentian Code:[2] "A son is not the chief of kindred after the father, in succession, for chief of kindredship is during life (*ny byd pentkenedyl ymab guedy y tat yn nessaf idaw kanys oes nodawe yw pen kynedlaeth*).

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 5, 345, 623. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 79.

Thus the chieftain of the tribe became surrounded by at least three families, the members of which held the hereditary tribal offices, and were the guardians of the traditions of the tribe. A passage in the *Cyvreithiau Cymru* shows this.[1] "There are three records of a kindred, the record of a court of law, the record of a chief of kindred conjointly with his seven elders, and the record of Bardism. The record of a court of law depends upon the judges; the record of a chief of kindred depends upon his seven elders, to wit the privileges and events of their kindred, and the seven elders are to transfer it to the chief of kindred who succeeds the one who may die; and the record of Bardism depends on the Bards authorised as teachers, and by the privilege of session. These three records are called the three authenticated records of country and kindred, and upon them depend the authenticating of every degree of descent and every privilege of arms." This passage gives a fair idea of the Welsh tribe. The chief of the kindred decided who were the tribesmen; the Bards kept the records of the decisions. To the priests was assigned another duty—they were the hereditary guardians of the tribe against the supernatural arts that might be used against them, and it was their duty to invoke yet stronger supernatural aid against the enemies of the tribe. The chief of kindred said who were tribesmen, that is, who were entitled to the supernatural aid of the wizards or priests of the tribe, the bards recorded the decisions, and the new tribesman could call on the priest to use his magic arts on his behalf and to defeat the devices of the wizards or priests of a rival tribe against him; for one of the rights of the new tribesman was to partake in the tribal religious ceremonies as the tribal people had become his people,—their God, his God.

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 559.

Surrounded by these families of advisers the chief had to carry out their decisions. When the chief of the kindred decided that a person should be admitted a member of the tribe, the chief, in cases where it was necessary for him to do so, had to perform the ceremony, and that, whether the candidates for admission were children of the tribesman or only connected in theory. The ceremony of admission would seem to have had a kind of religious character. After it was over, the chief affixed to the new tribesman a mark to show to all the world that the novice belonged to the tribe; that mark, the mark of ownership, was, usually, cutting off a lock or some portion of the hair of the new member. Among the heathen customs the Celtic Church took over was this cutting the hair, and probably the true secret of the great contest between the Celtic and Latin Churches on the subject of tonsure, was due to the fact that the Celtic, which was called by the Latins the heathen, tonsure, was, in some way, connected with a ceremony in which the magic rites of the tribe into which the new tribesman had, by the tonsure, proclaimed to the world he was entitled to belong and rely on its Gods for his protection, were employed.

In addition to the supernatural, the new tribesman on admission became entitled to material rights. Up to the time he was admitted a tribesman, his parents had to support him, if he was the son of a tribesman. The Welsh laws contain some very elaborate rules as to this support, and the respective shares and obligations of the father and mother in regard to it. They have a very strong resemblance to the modern law as to the maintenance and support of illegitimate children; and, according to our notions, most of the Welsh children of that time would have been illegitimate. If the child died

before he was admitted to be a tribesman, the father succeeded to his property, as he was liable to keep him. When once the child was admitted to be a member of the tribe, all the rights of the parents ceased, and also their obligations; they had no longer to maintain the child, for as a tribesman he could demand a share in the property of the tribe, and, until he got it, the chief was bound to maintain him; and, if his share in the tribal property did not suffice for his support, the chief was bound to make it up. Following from this change of liability, on the death of a tribesman, it was not the tribesman's family, but the chief, who succeeded to his property as part of the possessions of the tribe.

As the power of the tribe developed and its limits extended, so the limits of the chief's responsibility were widened. He was responsible to the tribe for any slave or stranger who was permitted to live on tribal territory or to possess tribal property. On the death of any of such personages the chief took all the property, not presumably for himself, but as the duly qualified representative of the tribe. The chief would dictate to the dwellers on tribal territory who were not tribesmen what they might or might not do—what employment they might or might not follow. Within the limits of his authority the chief was autocratic, but the limits were not wide. Although in the Welsh codes the Welsh word for chief is translated king, yet the Welsh chief had little in common with the feudal king. The Welsh chief was essentially a tribesman, a member of a particular family it is true, but still a tribesman; the only difference between him and the other tribesmen being that on his being injured the tribe received larger compensation than it did if any other tribesman was hurt. But in no way was the Welsh chieftain the feudal king, the supreme

landowner, the fountain of honour. He was only the selected member of a particular family, and as such the first in position among the heads of the families that made up the tribe. It is necessary to bear this in mind, for the position of the chief is often misunderstood. When it is said that the chief gave a grant of land to the Christian missionaries, it is only true to say that he allowed them, as he would other strangers, to settle on some part of the tribal land, but he could not give or alienate a yard of it to them or any one else without the consent of the tribe, and at the date of the coming of the early missionaries it is very questionable if he could do this, even with their consent. One of the points that makes it so doubtful whether the *Book of Llandaff* is genuine or not, is the fact that it records charters given by Welsh chiefs at a time when it is most questionable if, with the best will in the world, they could have given anything. Another important point is seen from the position of the chief. It by no means followed, as is often supposed, that because the chief adopted Christianity, that of necessity caused the tribe to do so. It was in no way like the conversion of the king and his court. The power the chief had over the heads of the different families was comparatively small, and they would probably regard his so-called conversion merely as the addition of some new wizard to the existing stock, whose aid it might or might not be advisable to invoke. Probably a good deal of the power and influence of the chief depended on the chief himself, but the most powerful Welsh chieftain must always have felt that his authority for all practical purposes did not extend much beyond the territory of the tribe, even if it went so far.

The position and power of the remaining great official of the tribe, the priest, is one that is very difficult to define. Probably his power and influence, to a great extent, rested

on the success of his predictions or interpretations of the Divine will. Each tribe of any consequence had its priest or priests, and one of the families that went to make up the tribe was the family in whom the priestly office was hereditary. Whether at any time the chief was also priest may be doubted, as the separation between the two positions of chief and priest, so far as either Celtic history or tradition go, tends to show that this was not the case, and that the chief was never so important as to take charge of the religious duties of the tribe; in fact, although the chief might be descended from the Gods, yet he was not the medium through which the Gods worked according to Celtic notions. The priest, or rather the family of priests, were the magicians on whom the king or chief relied for obtaining supernatural aid when required. Both in the time of Patrick and in Celtic fiction, the Irish chieftain had always ready near him a number of miracle workers, and the great reason of the Irish chiefs accepting Christianity as far as they did was to be able to avail themselves of the miraculous powers of Patrick. The compromise with Paganism, which is usually spoken of as the conversion of Ireland, was, in the eyes of the Irish chieftains, merely the substitution, or rather the addition, of new magicians to the old ones; and, subject to this slight change, matters, in the opinion of the chiefs, would go on as before. The chief of the kindred would still decide tribal questions. The bard would still recite the glories of the tribe. The priest, recruited by the new comers, would, when required, still deal in the supernatural for the advantage of the tribe.

In order more clearly to see what was the position of a tribesman, it will be well to consider how the man fared who was not a tribesman. Such a state of things might arise in two ways: (1) A man might never have been a

tribesman, never have been a member of any tribe, such as the child who could not ascertain who were his parents; and (2), a man who having been a tribesman had lost his tribal rights, and ceased to be a member of the tribe. A person who was in either of these positions, and especially one who had been turned out of a tribe, found himself in a most unenviable condition; he was in a worse state than a wild beast. Every one of every sex and age, on the sound of a horn and within hearing of it, was bound to follow such a man, to keep up with him with barking dogs, until he either was driven to put to sea, or had passed for sixty hours out of their sight.[1]

In the Irish laws the case was the same; a person who declined to act in conformity with tribal usage became an outlaw and was expelled, not by any judicial sentence, but by the common assent of the tribe. It was this tribeless man from whose condition the early ideas of an outlaw were derived. Any one might kill him with impunity, as there was no one to avenge his death, no one to insist on payment of his money value, for he had no such value. By ceasing to be a member of the tribe, he had lost his right to the protection of the tribe. Not only was he a stranger, but a dangerous stranger; no one was responsible for his acts, so the sooner he was put out of the world the better. His life was not worth an hour's purchase, as it was both the interest and the duty of every tribesman to kill him as a person who was wholly irresponsible. A man, if he had been a tribesman, could be reduced to this position for crime, but only for very serious crime; still, although he lost his rights, his descendants did not necessarily lose theirs. "A person," says the Venedotian Code, "does not lapse from his rights until he becomes a stranger (*alltud*); for if a person remain in another country, whether on

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 478.

account of being banished, or for murder, or other injury, so that he cannot revisit his country freely, the law says his title is not extinguished until the ninth degree, at what time soever he may come to claim it."[1]

This condition of the tribeless man will illustrate the position taken up by the Church in her organization. Every Celt was presumed to belong to some church, and the test of belonging to it was, not that it was the parish church where he dwelt, but that it was the church of his tribe; on ceasing to be a tribesman his right in that church also ceased, and this placed him in a very awkward position. If he had to prove his word or his right to anything, he had to do it on the sacred relics of his tribe, which were kept in the tribal church. By ceasing to be a tribesman, he ceased to have the right of using those relics; he ceased, in fact, to have any legal rights, for he could not enforce them. He also lost the right to the aid and help of the priests of the tribe and their ministrations, as these were exclusively confined to the members of the tribe, and he had ceased to fill that character. It would seem that at first the loss of the civil, the tribal right, included the loss of the religious right as being part of the tribal, but so far as the evidences of the laws go, it does not appear that the converse was the case, and that if the church deprived a man of religious rights, in fact, excommunicated him, he therefore lost his tribal rights as well.

There is little doubt that a man could be turned out of the tribe of the saint by the Church, but there is nothing to show that this affected his civil position, or that he could be turned out of the tribe of the land by anybody other than the tribe, as, for instance, the priests, and there is a good deal to indicate he could not. In the Venedo-

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 173.

tian Code[1] it is said, "Whoever breaks a legal bequest shall be excommunicated as a publican or pagan." A passage in the Dimetian Code[2] says that, "A witness may be objected to for being excommunicated by name, and if it can be proved by the country, the objection is to stand." Similar provisions in the case of persons excommunicated by name are found elsewhere in the Dimetian Code,[3] but there is nothing to show that an excommunicated person lost his rights in the lay tribe. The matter is of some importance as indicating what was the power of the Church. Was it strong enough to prevail over the tribal organization, and make its sentence equivalent to expulsion? It would seem not, and it would also seem that such was not the claim or the idea of the Celtic Church to dictate who should or who should not be admitted to her ministrations. As long as a person was a member of the tribe he had the rights of a tribesman, and the tribe did not admit any foreign power, "no foreign prince, state, or potentate," to say who were or who were not its members. On two points in the history of the Church this has an important bearing. (*a*) Could a man be a member of the tribe of the land and of the Saint at the same time? and, if not, if a man ceased to be a member of the tribe of the land when he became a member of the tribe of the Saint, did his old rights as member of the tribe of the land revive if he was turned out of the tribe of the Saint? A tribesman took orders, and so became a member of the tribe of the Saint; he was afterwards turned out of the tribe of the Saint; was he a member of the tribe of the land, or what was his position? The question is more easily asked than answered, but the answer would throw a flood of light on the precise position of the early Celtic Church. At present it is not possible to give an answer

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 85. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 423. [3] *Ibid.*, i, 590, 597.

that is in any way satisfactory. (*b*) The second point, as to the power of the clergy, arises in connection with the proceedings of the Llandaff monks. From the *Book of Llandaff* it appears they were in the habit of excommunicating the Welsh chieftains. Unless, however, the Celtic clergy had reached a very different stage from what is elsewhere recorded of them, it would seem that these so-called excommunications could hardly be matters of fact. We get (1) that the tribe could, on certain causes, sever the tribal tie and turn out a tribesman; (2), that this practically caused the tribesman to be deprived of religious as well as civil rights, as the church was that of the tribe and only for tribesmen, and as he had ceased to be one he could not use it; (3), there is, however, no evidence that the church of its own power could deprive a tribesman of his rights, that is, that the Church was superior to and was not the servant of the tribe; (4), there is still less evidence to show that the priests of one tribe could interfere with the tribal rights of another, and it would be a very unlikely thing to happen; yet this is what the Llandaff monks purported to do, according to the *Book of Llandaff*. Latin priests having authority over all the persons in a given area, irrespective of tribe or any other distinction might do this, but Celtic priests, the officers of a tribe, could not, and the assertion that it was done leads to a doubt of the truth of the statement.

Not the least interesting part of the tribal organization is to determine the position in which the priests stood at the adoption by the tribe of Christianity, and the subsequent history of their position. As has been already said, the priests seem in Pagan times to have been a body of men, probably an hereditary class, who professed to be able to perform magic acts for the benefit of the tribe or the tribesman. When the tribe became Christian, the

priests were in the same position as before, but they had given up Pagan and taken to Christian practices. The organization of the tribe remained as it was, and the rights of the tribe were unaffected by the change. It is clear that the priests gradually began to improve their position by the introduction of the idea of the tribe of the Saint; but the history of the change in the condition of the priests from being merely a body of men who dealt in the supernatural when required, to becoming a body of men who purported to exercise complete rule over the religious concerns of the tribe, is one of the most important parts of Church history, and one which has yet to be written. It is only by working at the tribal organization, and carefully considering the varied relations of the different officers and members of the tribe, that any idea can be formed of it. Probably it was the gradual growth of years, and so gradual, that the change was hardly noticed; but, nevertheless, the change was going on, and was one that had the most wide-reaching effects, and probably completely changed the history of the Celtic Church.

Another point in regard to the position of the priests in connection with the chief of the tribe deserves notice. The Welsh codes, and also the Irish laws, seem to indicate that there were families of chiefs; and the danger to an English lawyer in dealing with these questions is, lest he should allow his ideas as to lord and vassal to enter into the explanation of a state of things that was ignorant of these names, and of the meaning of any such terms as those used by English lawyers. In some respects, at first sight, the chief of the kindred would represent the chief of the tribe; but he was really only the chief counsellor of the tribe, and, except that he had the power of deciding questions of status, he does not seem to have had any

other ruling power. The chief of the kindred was the nearest living relation to the common ancestor, and, it would seem, might be taken from the heads of any of the families who fulfilled this qualification.

But the chief of the tribe was in a different position; he was selected, as appears, not from the tribe at large, but from out of one or more families, and from those alone. As the priests, the bards, and the other officers, seem to have become hereditary offices in certain families, so with the chieftainship. He was selected on a vacancy from out of the members of those families, not out of the tribe at large. The qualifications for it are thus given:— He must be an efficient man, the eldest of the efficient men of his kindred, unto the end of the ninth descent; the chief of a household is a man with a wife and children by legitimate marriage. He must be complete and perfect as to bodily senses, that is, as to hearing, sight, and locomotion, and is, on a ballot, to have the secret vote of fifty men, all born Welshmen and of his own blood.[1]

Above the chiefs of the tribes was the king, and the kingship seems to have been of two kinds; the king who was the ruler over several tribes, and the king who was ruler over several small kingdoms. This again seems to have been a family matter, the king being selected out of the members of certain families. Whether the district king, or king of the country, the term "Cunedda and his sons" describes what the ruling family was, and that out of some of the members of that family, or families, the future kings of the district and king of the country were chosen. The king of Aberffraw was said to be king over all Wales (*Cymru*),[2] but it appears from the codes that there were also kings of Gwent and Dimetia. The king of Aberffraw would be the king of the country, the kings of Gwent and

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 537, 539. [2] *Ibid.*, ii, 585.

Dimetia, kings of districts, and the chiefs of tribes living in the districts would complete the organization. The king of the country would be selected from one set of families, "Cunedda and his sons"; the kings of the district from another set of families, and the chiefs from a third; and while it would appear that the succession was hereditary in those families, it had nothing to do with primogeniture; any fit son, whether the eldest or not, that was chosen, was entitled to succeed to the throne. The Welsh here following the Irish doctrine of the eldest and worthiest.

It will not be necessary to follow out the tribal organization further than to point out that it furnished an example of the development of the Celtic Church on the tribal lines, to the exclusion of what might be expected. The chief had his family of priests to assist him, so had the district king, so had the king of the country; and it would have been a not unnatural development in Church matters to have found the priest of the district kings claiming authority over the priests of the chieftains, and those of the king of the country over the priests of the district kings. Such, however, was not the line taken, and it was most probably not taken owing to the strong family and tribal ideas that prevailed. There seems to have been no idea of dependence between the district kings and the king of the country, or between the chieftains and the district kings. Such an idea would have been opposed to the theory of blood relationship; all the families in the tribe were of equal rank, there was no idea of superior or inferior; and it does not appear that the priests of the king of the country were any higher in rank or position than those of the tribal chieftains. The theory of relationship was destructive of the theory of superiority, and the result was that the development of the Church went

upon totally different lines to the Latin, but on lines far more Celtic. As the family and relationship was the basis of the lay system, so it became that of the church system. The clergy, like the laity, formed themselves into families and groups of families; and the development in this way proceeded on tribal lines, rather than as would have been expected on the idea of the king's priests ruling the others. It is a most instructive piece of Church history, and shows, perhaps better than anything else, the tenacity with which the Welsh clung to the tribal organization, both in civil and religious matters, and how powerful that organization was.

The whole of the evidence of the Welsh codes goes to show that the system that had prevailed in Wales was based on kinship, family, and tribe; and that, although in the later Welsh laws, both in the *Cyvreithiau Cymru* and *Leges Walliæ*—there are large importations both of the Roman civil and English law, especially the last in connection with land, yet that the old system remains quite clear to those who will take the trouble to look for it. There is, naturally, much that is obscure and more that is difficult to understand, but the broad features are plainly discernible. It is also clear that while the system was in full operation the Church came on the scene, and the Church has been the means of preserving much of the old ideas. Had the tribal idea been more broken in upon by contact with the outside world, it is most likely that the Celtic Church would have become far more in harmony with the Latin. The fact of the introduction of the Church while the tribal organization was in full vigour, goes some way to fix an early origin for the Church, as it is fairly certain that the Celts embraced Christianity before any great change had been brought about in the original idea of the tribe. Although the date is uncertain,

it seems clear from this that the date must have been an early one. There is, however, this point to be borne in mind, that the state of things here dealt with was most likely the work of Cunedda and his sons, they having swept away all that preceded them. But whether this is so or not, the fact that both the Welsh tribe and the Welsh church have preserved for us a large mass of archaic laws and customs is a matter for which we should be grateful. The history of the organization of the Celtic tribes, and the development of Christianity working on that organization, form a page of Church history quite as interesting and equally important for Englishmen as that describing the labours of St. Martin of Tours, or the mission of St. Augustine.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTIAN SETTLEMENT.

No reliable details exist of the time when, the persons by whom, or the modes by which the conversion of Britain and Ireland to Christianity was accomplished. It is fairly certain that towards the close of the Roman military occupation of the country, before the garrisons were withdrawn, Christianity was established here; but for how long this had been the case, or how, or in what manner it came about, there is not only no satisfactory evidence, but really no evidence at all. It is important to remember this, for the want of definite reliable information has led to the growth of a series of legends, some of great beauty, all of great interest, as to the establishment of Christianity in Britain and Ireland. As is usually the case, whenever there is a demand for knowledge on a particular subject, the mediæval writers furnished a supply to meet it. The result here is, that in the south part of Wales alone, there are a series of legends, which ascribe at the very least to no less than eleven persons the honour of being the founder, or early teachers of Christianity in Britain. Here are to be met with Apostles, companions of our Lord, members of the early Church, whose names are written in the Pauline Epistles, all of whom are alleged to have come "*ad ultimos Brittannos*". Probably no one would be more astonished than these worthies themselves, on being told all the adventures they are stated to have met with in their journeys to these Islands.

Not content with this series of improbabilities, the Welsh have set up a theory of their own, and sent a Welsh Prince to Rome, in the legend of which Bran forms one of the leading characters. Of his existence the evidence is most meagre; of his journey to Rome there is still less; of his conversion there, and his return to convert his own countrymen, there is none at all. It is, however, something like heresy among pious Welshmen to doubt either the existence or the travels of "the blessed Bran". It may be said at once that there is nothing like historical evidence to support any of the legends as to the introduction of Christianity, that such evidence as there is goes to prove the legends to be untrue, that it is useless to waste time in discussing what are at best but "fond things of vain imagining".

In the midst of such a slough of conjecture it is very difficult to reach any firm foothold. Leaving out the wilder legends, it is fairly safe to believe that it is probable that Christianity reached England in one of three ways:— (1) By Christian traders from Gaul, Spain, or Germany. There had been for a long time some commercial intercourse between these countries, and it is by no means improbable that Christianity followed commerce, and so was introduced into this country. Or it may have been (2), by the soldiers or recruits to the legions who formed the garrisons of the country; for some of the inscriptions that are still extant indicate that there were Christian soldiers in the legions, and the custom of recruiting the legions from a distance would fully account for the presence of Christians amongst them. Or it may have been (3) by missionaries from Gaul or Germany. It is clear from various accounts, especially from the celebrated letter from the Christians at Lyons and Vienne to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, written about 177, during one of the persecutions

of the Christians,[1] that Christianity had been established there as early as the second century. It would be very likely, having regard to the intercourse between the two countries while they remained under Roman rule, that in some mode or other Gaulish Christians found their way to these Islands. From each, or, perhaps, from all of these ways, it is probable that Christianity reached us, but it is quite impossible to say when, how, or by whose means; any attempt to do so is only conjecture. It is doubtful if it was before the end of the second, or the beginning of the third century. Irenæus, who wrote at the end of the second century,[2] mentions one by one all the Churches of the West, but his list contains no mention of a British Church. We know that in the Gallic Churches there was, about 250, a great missionary effort, and the extension of Christianity to these Islands may have been one of its results. The Diocletian persecution, which began in 303, is always traditionally said to have reached as far as Britain, and the first British martyr, St. Alban, is said to have been among the slain. There is no real evidence of this; but still it may be taken provisionally that the introduction of Christianity into Britain was somewhere between 250 and 300, although it is quite possible it may have been much earlier, or even a good deal later. It may safely, however, be assumed that Christianity was firmly established in Britain before the middle of the fourth century; that this had been done by means of travellers from Gaul, either merchants, or missionaries, or soldiers. The all-important questions then have to be faced: (1) Who were the people with whom Christianity had to contend with in its efforts to get established in Britain? (2) Were the conditions of its establishment the same, or

[1] Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, i, 287.

[2] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 24.

substantially the same, in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland? A close examination of the different conditions of things Christianity had to meet with in different parts of the country furnishes a clue to much of the subsequent ecclesiastical history of these Islands. To understand this, it is necessary to state something, in addition to what was said in the last chapter, of the people and of the religions that Christianity encountered in Britain.

First, as to the people. At the time of the Roman conquest of this Island, and the state of things in England does not appear to have altered to any great extent in the next three centuries, Britain was inhabited by at least three distinct races of people. The first, the earliest dwellers we know of, or can trace, were the inhabitants of these Islands before the first Celtic invasion or movement—the people the Celts found here when they came. It may well be that they were not the earliest settlers, but so far as we yet know they represent the earliest inhabitants. Most of our knowledge as to these people is inferential—mainly derived from certain linguistic analogies and comparisons, and from the study of the skulls and remains found in such of their barrows and cairns as have been explored. Modern writers call these early settlers "Ivernians". What their name really was, we don't know; but "Ivernii was the name of the earliest inhabitants of Ireland. The most important point with regard to these people is, that much of what little we know as to the Pagan rites practised by them goes to show that such rites were not in their origin Celtic, but came from some other source. That source modern scholars believe to be still earlier natives of the country than the Ivernii.

As for the Celts themselves, they were divided into two great groups, Goidelic and Brythonic, Goidelic being the

earlier of the two races that came over to this country, who gradually drove out the Ivernians, or drove them into the remote recesses of the West and of Wales. In their turn the Goidels were supplanted by the Brythons, who, at the time of the Roman invasion, held the greater part of England. The division between the races is in the first place linguistic. The Goidels include in language the dialects of Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man; the Brythons include the dialects of Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany; but this linguistic division does not accurately represent the actual division of the country at the time of the Roman invasion. Then the Brythons were possessed of all England and Wales, except the following places: in the west, a part cut off by the Mendip Hills and the River Stour, the territory of the Danmonii and Durotriges, the modern counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, and the Southern part of Somerset. Following the Severn to its junction with the Teme, and the Teme to its source in the Kerry Hills, thence westerly to the sea, that is, the Goidels held the greater part of South Wales, with parts of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Brecon, and Radnor, and the greater part of Cardigan, Pembroke, Carmarthen, Glamorgan, and Monmouth, the countries of the Silures and Dimetæ; in North Wales, the country from the Mawddach to the Dee, Anglesea, Carnarvonshire, Flint, Denbigh, a small part of Merioneth, the Isle of Man, and Cumberland, and the south-west corner of Scotland. These districts formed the Goidelic countries, with traces in them, here and there, as in Pembrokeshire, Glamorganshire, Carnarvonshire, Anglesea, Cornwall, of Ivernians. If, then, a map is drawn out with the above boundaries marked on it, it will be found that Wales was Goidelic, with the exception of a wedge which formed the country of the Ordovices, that is the modern counties of Montgomery, with parts of

Merioneth and Cardigan, north of the Rheidol; this formed the Brythonic portion of Wales.

So, speaking broadly, the Brythons held all England, except Cumberland in the north, Cornwall, Devon, Wilts, and part of Somerset in the south, but in Wales only the wedge which consisted of Montgomery, Merioneth, and North Cardigan. The Brythonic tribes were the Brigantes, Coritavi, Cornavii, Ordovices, Dobunnii, Belgæ, Atrebates, Catuvelauni, Iceni, and Cantii. The Goidelic tribes were the Durotriges, Danmonii, Silures, and Dimetæ. Roughly speaking, such was the division of the country. This division does not deal with Gwyddel, Cymry, Scotti, or Picts, but only with the races Goidel and Brython, under one or the other of which all the above tribes must be grouped.

It is most difficult to place any reliance upon the hearsay, on hearsay which is all we have as to the religions and customs of the tribes who inhabited Britain. It must be borne in mind that Cæsar never speaks of the Goidels, only of the Brythons, and that all he tells us must be read as applying to the east, south, and centre of England. Strabo may have described some of the Goidels, but it is certain Cæsar did not. Tacitus certainly does. It is necessary to remember this, for those writers, who purport to give a description of Britain by piecing together the accounts of the manners and customs described by different authors, as for instance, in the way employed by the late Emperor of the French in his life of Cæsar,[1] are really applying to one thing the accounts given by writers of different people at different times, and thus do not get an accurate result of the subject of their enquiries.

That the division between the two peoples was recognized at the time of the Roman conquest there is clear proof in a well-known passage of Cæsar:[2] "Britanniæ pars

[1] *Life of Cæsar*, ii, 180. [2] *De Bello Gallico*, v, 12.

interior ab iis incolitur quos natos in insula ipsa memoria proditum dicunt. Maritima pars ab iis qui prædæ ac belli inferendi causa ex Belgis transierant." Here, those born on the island are the Goidels; the race that emigrated from Belgic Gaul and crossed the channel are the Brythons.

Bearing this distinction between the two races in mind, the first question that is met with is, Had these races the same or a different religion, and, if different religions, in what did their religions differ, and of what did the differences consist? To a slight extent the question can be answered. The religion of the two races differed. The Brythonic religion was, in the main, that of the Gaulish Celts. As they took with them to Britain the distinctive names of their tribes, such as Belgæ, Atrebates, etc., so they carried with them the rites, the duties, the beliefs of their tribes. Cæsar gives us a glimpse as to what was the religion of the Gaulish Celts of the Brythonic type. He says that they believed themselves sprung from the gods of the earth,[1] which gods Cæsar identifies with some of the Roman deities, with Mercury, whom, he says,[2] they esteemed above all other gods as the inventor of art, the guide of travellers, the protector of commerce. The other deities, Cæsar says, resembled the Roman gods Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva, but he does not give their names. The names of three of them are, however, found in the lines of Lucan:[3]—

> "Et quibus immitis placatur sanguine diro
> Teutates horrensque feris altaribus Hesus,
> Et Taranis Scythicæ non mitior ara Dianæ."

Cæsar says, and probably truly, that the ideas of the Gauls as to gods were mostly the same as those of other nations. From other writers we learn that the Gauls

[1] *De Bello Gallico*, vi, 16. [2] *Ibid.*, 15.
[3] *Pharsalia*, i, 444.

made gods of most things, and worshipped rivers, fountains, streams, and woods. The Rhine was adored as a god, and the Ardennes as a goddess.

Such being the worship of the Gaulish Celts at home, it may be safely inferred that a similar polytheistic system was the prevalent worship of the Celts who formed the Brythonic population of these Islands. "Every locality", says Rhys,[1] "had its divinity, and the rivers were specially identified with certain divine beings, as witness the streams that still bear the name of Dee, and kindred ones." As to one river, probably the Ribble, the Belisama—this name occurs on inscriptions in Gaul as that of a goddess. On some of the Roman inscriptions that have been found, there is a mixture of Roman idolatry and British superstition. Thus Camden gives the inscription on a Roman altar to the goddess Verbeia, the nymph of a Yorkshire river.[2] Another altar, dug up in Cumberland, is inscribed to the god Belatucadrus.[3] This debased polytheism, which was willing to worship anything, or to believe anything, was the religion of the greater part of the country. Wherever Christianity met with it, one result alone was possible, the Galilean must conquer or perish; the Pagan polytheism must be stamped out as the accursed thing. The Latin clergy had therefore a simple task—"Believe or Die" was the message of the Christian priests to the Brython. His religion must be done away with, and destroyed root and branch.

The early Goidelic inhabitants of the country had practised a form of religion that differed considerably from the easy-going polytheism of the Brythonic Celts. From what little the Roman writers tell us of Druidism, it must have been a stern, cruel form of belief. One of its leading features was human sacrifice. So much non-

[1] *Celtic Britain*, 67. [2] *Britannia*, 2nd ed., 867. [3] *Ibid.*, 1011.

sense has been written by modern Welsh writers about the Druids that it is difficult to speak seriously of them. It, however, seems clear that they were the hereditary priests and poets of the people, that they professed to be able to propitiate the Gods. They presided over the sacrifices, and preserved the routine of religious duties. The disposers of rewards and punishments, they were the arbitrators in almost all disputes, public or private. With the vilest superstitions which, if they are not slandered, they practised, or allowed to be practised, they yet believed in the immortality of the soul, and its transmigration into other bodies. They professed to understand the movements of the planets, the laws of nature, the omnipotence of the gods. They alleged they could exercise magic arts, and if these failed, were able to resort to supernatural powers. Their influence with an ignorant and excitable people was immense. "We may conceive," says a writer,[1] describing Druidism in Gaul, "what despotism must have been exercised over a superstitious nation by this caste of men, depositaries of all knowledge, authors and interpreters of all laws, divine or human, accusers, judges, executioners." The great influence of the Druid rested on his supposed magical powers, and the history of the conversion of the Celtic countries is the history of the strife for supremacy between the Pagan magician and the Christian missionary. For Ireland we have this in the contest at Tara, between Patrick and the Druids of Loeghair; for Scotland, in the contest between Columba and the Druids of Bruidh; for Wales, in the contest between David and the magician Boia, with his followers. In each case it is said that the Druid resorted to the supernatural, by interfering with the ordinary course of the elements, usually by bringing on darkness; in each

[1] Thierry, *Histoire des Gaulois*, vol. ii, 1.

the Christian triumphed by his ability to work greater supernatural results than the Pagan. Cæsar says that in his time the great sanctuary of Druidism was Britain. Probably the Gaulish Druids, especially those in the south-east, had learnt something of the civilization that was developing there, and had begun to modify the stern rites and savage practices by which, in an earlier and more ignorant age, their influence had been maintained. Something of this kind is alluded to by Ammianus Marcellinus, in thus speaking of Druidism:[1] "The men of Gaul," he says, "having become gradually polished, caused the useful studies to flourish, which the bards, the *eubages* (prophets), and the Druids had begun to cultivate. The bards sang in heroic verse to the sound of their lyres the lofty deeds of men, the *eubages* tried by meditation to explain the order and marvels of nature. In the midst of these were distinguished the Druids, who, united in a society occupied themselves with profound and sublime questions, raised themselves above human affairs, and sustained the immortality of the soul."

The Goidelic Celts seem to have adopted Druidism, which was certainly not originally a Celtic form of religion, but it retained its chief home among them. In the Goidelic districts of North Wales, in Mona, the modern Anglesea, the chief seat of Druidism was situate. To Mona went the student from Britain or from Gaul, who desired to perfect himself in the higher forms of Druidic rites. From Mona, went forth the Druid, skilled with

[1] xv. "Per hæc loci hominibus paulatim excultis vigere studia laudabilium doctrinarum inchoata per Bardos et Eubages et Druidas. Et Bardi quidem fortia virorum illustrium facta heroicis composita versibus cum dulcibus lyræ modulis cantataruut: Eubages vero scrutantes summa et sublimia naturæ pandere conabantur; Inter hos Druidæ ingeniis celsiores ut autoritas Pythagoræ decrevit sodalitiis astricti consortiis quæstionibus occultarum rerum altarumque erecti sunt et despectantes humana pronuntiaruut animas immortales."

all the wisdom of Druidism, to guide and direct the faith and fortunes of the tribe to which he was attached.

It is not easy to say what was the original religion of the Goidelic Celts. Whatever it was, they had enormous powers of religious assimilation, and, when first met with, they appear to have combined the Ivernian Druidism with a modified form of the Brythonic polytheism. They had gods everywhere, and were prepared to admit new gods without raising any difficulty. It was in a Goidelic country, at Lydney, the sea god Nodens, a god who is said to have corresponded to Æsculapius,[1] had a temple. It was in a Goidelic country, Cheshire, the river Deva was worshipped. When Christianity came, this miscellaneous polytheism was abolished, but that was all. The old worship and philosophy remained; the Druid became the poet, the hereditary poet of the tribe, but he no longer relied, for the supernatural power he still claimed to possess, on magic arts, but on the Divine aid. He ceased to be a magician, and became a miracle worker. His philosophy the missionaries swallowed wholesale, but as the Irish laws were revised at Tara by the Christian missionary, so was the Druidic philosophy revised by the Christian missionary in Wales, and, so revised, it became the basis of the faith of the Celtic Church. Thus when the Christian missionary came to Britain he had to deal with two different sets of ideas. The Brythonic religion, which was idolatry, pure and simple; here the Christian could make no terms, accept no compromise. The Goidelic religion, which was philosophy plus idolatry; here the Christian could agree, if the idolatry was got rid of, to allow the philosophy to remain. So in Britain, Christianity having to deal with two very different states of things,

[1] Thackeray, *Ancient Britain*, i, 179. On altar is inscribed O | D M NODONTI | H BLANDINUS | ARMATURA | V S L M.

treated them in different ways—with the one, extermination, with the other, toleration.

So far as it is now possible to learn what the Druidic philosophy was, there appear to have been two main ideas:—(1) That the soul, after a certain existence here, would be re-absorbed and removed in some way to the being and the place from whence it sprung. As it was a part of the Deity when it came here first, it remained and must always remain a part of the Deity, although it might be obliged to pass through various stages until it became fit for re-absorption. The soul, being divine, can be kept so, or again brought to a state of perfection, by a sufficient source of meditation, contemplation, and suffering. That a man of his own power could attain to and keep in a state of perfection if he went through a sufficient course of philosophy. (2) That God was to be seen everywhere in nature, that everything was good, but it depended on man if it was allowed to remain good.

These ideas were the outcome of the Druidic philosophy, as accepted by the early Christian teachers; probably, but for the teaching of the Latin Church to which they were diametrically opposed, they would have become the accepted creed of Western Christianity. But the Latin Church, adopting the idea of the Latin lawyers that a man succeeded not only to all the property, but also to all the liabilities of his ancestor, taught that the descendants of Adam had inherited, not only Adam's rights, but also his liabilities, one of which was the responsibility for his sin. It is a curious instance of the effect on religious belief of the system of Roman law. The Eastern Church and the Goidelic Celts, neither of whom fell under the rule of the Roman lawyer, were never troubled with the importance of the doctrine of original sin. But the

Brythonic Celt, who had been subjected to the rule of Rome, and had been accustomed to Roman ideas, on his conversion to Christianity, accepted the doctrine of original sin without a doubt and without a difficulty. The faith of the Goidelic Celts, as above stated, is usually called, from its great exponent, Pelagianism. Pelagius, the Greek form of Morgan, was a Goidelic Celt educated at the great monastery of Bangor Iscoed, who with his friend Celstius, an Irishman, preached at Rome about the year 410. Neither the history of the great Pelagian controversy, nor that of Pelagius, fall within the present subject. But from the accounts that have come down to us, Pelagianism is a strong piece of evidence in favour of the views here put forward, that the Christian teachers in this Island had to contend with two forms of Paganism. While Goidelic Britain became moved by Pelagianism to its centre, Brythonic Britain seems hardly to have felt it. To such an extent is this the case, that if a map was prepared showing the parts of England and Wales which were affected or otherwise by Pelagianism, it would be found that the map showed roughly the division of the country between the Goidel and the Brython.

Most writers on the ecclesiastical history of Britain recognise that an epoch in that history is marked by the Hallelujah Victory. Its practical effect was that the vanquished agreed to accept the Christianity of the victors. Not only did Germanus return triumphant to Gaul, but he sent Palladius to Ireland about 431, to extend there the area of Latin Christianity. Dr. Todd[1] is of opinion that it is probable that at this time there were scattered groups of Christians in Ireland, and cites in support of this view[2] a passage from the *Tripartite Life of Patrick*, re-

[1] *St. Patrick*, 221.

[2] Jocelyn, *Life of Patrick*, ed. 1809, p. 149; *Tripartite Life*, Rolls ed., i, 95.

lating the finding the four glass chalices buried at Dumhagraidh and the ordination of Ailbe. Be that as it may, these isolated groups of Christians would very fairly represent the state of things both in Wales and Ireland. Small settlements of Christians were surrounded by Pagans; the bulk of the people professing themselves Christians when it suited their purpose, as when there was anything to be gained by doing so, but when there was nothing, falling back into Paganism, worshipping the old gods, assisting at the old rites. This glimpse of Irish Christianity probably also describes Welsh Christianity, and easily accounts for the second mission of St. Germanus in 447, to repress the new outbreak of Pelagianism. In all probability, the real state of things was that the so-called British Christians, who had become Christians wholesale after the triumph of the Hallelujah Victory, gradually returned to their old faith, and so necessitated the return of St. Germanus to put down what, not liking to admit their failure, the ecclesiastical authorities called Pelagianism, in preference to what it really was, Paganism.

The parallel between St. Germanus and Patrick is closer than is usually recognised,—both their first missions were failures, both their second missions were successful. St. Germanus returned and completed his work in Wales, Patrick went to Ireland to carry out the work of Palladius. In both countries the state of things was almost identical, and was met and dealt with in the same way. Fortunately we have a fairly reliable account of the work of Patrick, but all we know of the doings of St. Germanus rests on legends which have been revised and adapted to promote the claims of the Church of Rome, and to show that Celtic Christianity was really Latin Christianity, and that Celtic priest and people submitted to Papal authority. St. Germanus, Latin writers say,[1] was sent by Pope Celestine

to Britain; St. Germanus, Latin writers say, sent Patrick to Ireland, and thus Germanus is the link that unites Britain and Ireland to Rome.[2] As might be expected, later legends have expanded and elaborated this. Nennius connects St. Germanus with Vortigern and Wales, and prolongs his stay in Britain.[3] The hymn of St. Fiace connects Patrick with Germanus, and states that Patrick remained with Germanus in the south of Albion, in the southern part of Letha, and read the Canon with him.[4] St. Fiace's hymn, from internal evidence, cannot be as old as the seventh century, and the notes on that hymn in the Franciscan *Liber Hymnorum*, probably not earlier than the eleventh century.[5] The *Book of Lismore* brings Patrick over to Britain with Germanus, and interpreting Letha as Latium makes out he went to Rome. But the Welsh writers were not prepared to give up their part in the glories of St. Germanus. A passage in the *Achau y Saint*[6] states that Garmon, the Welsh form of Germanus, "founded two choirs of Saints, and placed Bishops and divines in them that they might teach the Christian faith to the natives of the Cymry where they were become degenerate in the faith. One choir he founded in Llancarvan, where Dubricius the saint was principal, and he himself was Bishop there. The other, near Caerworgan, where he appointed Iltutus to be principal, and Lupus (called Bleidan) was the chief Bishop there. After which he placed Bishops in Llandaff; he established Dubricius Archbishop there, and Cadoc the saint, the son of Gwynllien, took his place in the choir of Llancarvan, and the Archbishop of Llandaff was Bishop

[1] Prosper Aquitan., *H. and S.*, i, 16. [2] *Todd*, 316.

[3] Nennius, *Hist. Brit.*, 32, *et seq.*

[4] See "St. Fiace's Hymn," *H. and S.*, vol. ii, part II, p. 356, and Roll's ed. of *Tripartite Life of Patrick*, ii, 406.

[5] *Tripartite Life*, introduction, p. cxiii.

[6] Rees, *Welsh Saints*, at p. 122, citing *Horæ Britannicæ*, ii, 161.

there also." As Rees points out, although this passage accounts for everything beautifully, yet it is full of contradictions. The *Achau y Saint* elsewhere says that Cystenynn Fendigaid, not Garmon, was the founder of Caerworgan,[1] that it was soon after burnt by the Irish, and that then the principal was not Illtyd but Patrick. At this time Illtyd could not have been old enough to have been the head of a religious house, as in early life he was a soldier,[2] and eight years after he was living with Ailbe. The *Liber Landavensis* says,[3] "that Dubricius appointed Illtyd to be head of Caerworgan. Lupus did not accompany Germanus on his second visit. Germanus returned to France, and died about 448. Dubricius is said to have died in 612; if it is true that he was appointed to any ecclesiastical office by Germanus it must either have been some years before he was born, or Dubricius must have been related to old Parr. Yet the *Liber Landavensis* says expressly,[4] and obviously with the object of proving the Latin origin of the Celtic Church and that the Welsh derived their orders from Rome, that Dubricius was consecrated by Germanus: "Postquam predicti seniores Pelagianum hæresim extirpaverant episcopos in pluribus locis Britanniæ consecrarent Super omnes autem Britanniam dextrales partes Britanniæ beatum Dubricium summum doctorem a rege et ab omni parochia electum Archiæpiscopum consecrarent Hac dignitate ei a Germano et Lupo data constiterent ei episcopalem sedem." As Lupus only came with Germanus on his first mission about 430, this would carry back the date of the birth of Dubricius to the beginning of the sixth century, or at least to 410, as even then persons were not usually made Bishops under twenty years of age. Probably the scribe

[1] Rees, *Ibid.* [2] S. Iltyd, *Cambro-British Saints*, p. 159.
[3] P. 63, old ed. [4] P. 66, old ed.

considered, if he considered at all, that when he was romancing, it was better to do it well. This shows how little reliance can be placed on much of what is usually accepted as the history of the Church in Wales.

Beyond the fact that Germanus came to Britain, that he probably came twice, that he found isolated groups of Christians and persons ready to become Christians or anything else, when their fears as to magic or the supernatural were worked upon—nothing reliable is known as to the mission of Germanus. His founding Bishoprics, his founding monasteries, his introducing a liturgy, are as true as his connection with Oxford, and no more so. They are all the inventions of a later age, wholly without the smallest scrap of anything like historical evidence. One matter connected with Germanus deserves notice—the places called after him, Llanhaiarn, St. Harmons, Bettws Garmon, Capel Garmon, and Llanarmon, are all in the Goidelic parts of Wales. It is true that there is a church in the Brythonic part, Llanfechan in Montgomeryshire, said to be dedicated to Germanus; but this means little, for all the churches that bear his name, or to take Rees' view, all the churches of which the foundation may be ascribed to him, are in the Goidelic portion of Wales. If, therefore, the usually received idea is correct, that Germanus came to Britain to put down Pelagianism, and the result of his work, so far as can be traced from the names of his churches, was all in the Goidelic part of Wales, an inference may be made that it was in these parts where Pelagianism was strongest, where he laboured most, where his influence was most felt. This is but another way of stating the proposition already put forward, that Brythonic Britain did not suffer from Pelagianism to the same extent as Goidelic; and for this reason, that, in the former, Christianity was substituted

for Paganism; in the latter, Paganism was adapted to Christianity.

It may be said that with Germanus the first chapter of the history of Christianity in Britain terminates. Brythonic England had become completely Christian, and had passed under the rule of the Latin Church; Goidelic Britain maintained her independence of Rome, and, to establish Christianity in those parts of the Island a new method was required, and a new condition of things necessitated. That method was tried in Ireland by Patrick with some success, and in Wales by David and others, with the same result. It may be described as the extension of the isolated bodies of Christians by means of monasticism.

But although Pelagianism and the visits of Germanus confirm the view here put forward as to the way in which the country became Christian, yet there is other and stronger evidence in support of it. One of these classes of evidence is the different nature of the sepulchral monuments in the Goidelic and Brythonic districts. If the inscribed and sculptured stones of Wales are of the date, or anything like the date, usually ascribed to them, they furnish very strong evidence in support of the view as to the difference between the Christianity of the Goidel and the Brython. No one who has even glanced at the subject, but knows the large number of inscribed stones in Cornwall, Wales, Ireland, the Isle of Man, and Scotland, compared with the other parts of the country. That is, that there is a marked difference between the sepulchral monuments of the Goidelic and Brythonic Christians, or between those used where the Latin Church was supreme and those used where the Celtic Church prevailed.

It is quite impossible that this state of things could be the result of accident, and it has always been a difficulty to give any reasonable account of it. The reason will

probably be found in the different natures of the Christianity professed by the two peoples. Had their beliefs been the same, it is not unfair to assume that their mode of treating their dead would have been similar. But their methods differed widely. Speaking in general terms, east of the Severn there are no inscribed or sculptured stones, while in Cornwall, and on the west of the Severn, they are found in considerable numbers. It may be said that east of the Severn they have been destroyed, but before this explanation can be accepted, it must be proved, which has not yet been done, that they ever existed.[1]

It is clear from the *Tripartite Life of Patrick*, as well as from other sources, that great importance was attached to certain stone monuments by the Pagan Goidels.[2] What those particular monuments were is doubtful. It is difficult to say whether they were sepulchral, or were idols, or perhaps represented both. Whatever they were, it is quite clear that they were the subject of great veneration from the Pagan Irish. At Tara, Patrick felt strong enough to secure their removal, but this he could not do in other places, and had to content himself with causing them to be inscribed with Christian symbols. In the *Tripartite Life* it is stated[3] that Patrick found three stones which the natives had erected in the memory of some remarkable act or Pagan observances. Patrick did not feel strong enough to order the removal of these stones, but inscribed on them the name of Christ in three different languages; on the one "Jesus", on another "Soter", and on the third "Salvator". This is probably one instance of what was then a usual custom, turning heathen monuments into Christian by placing on them Christian names

[1] The finding of the Ogham stone at Silchester is hardly an exception, from the special circumstances connected with it.

[2] I, p. 91 as to Cenn Cruaich, the chief idol of Ireland.

[3] I, p. 107.

or signs. Another is given in the remarkable story in the *Tripartite Life*, of the cross placed over a heathen grave and Patrick praying at it, when the man Lucius told him it had been placed there by mistake.[1]

This mode was practised both in Wales and Ireland, and well illustrates the way the country was converted. The Pagan Irish, or Welsh, would not object to anything being done that made their sacred monuments still more the objects of veneration; while the Christians would consider that the sign of the cross had obliterated all the vice of Paganism. Many of the stones that have come down to us are inscribed with rude crosses; some not with one alone, but several. And it is a matter deserving of inquiry whether any, and, if so, which of them, were originally Pagan monuments, but were Christianized by the inscription of the sign of the cross. Considerable doubt still exists as to the date of some of these stones. If it can be proved that the inscription is of a different date from the cross or other Christian symbol, it would give rise to an inference that the stone had either been Christianized in the mode above mentioned, or that if it already bore a Christian symbol, some powerful chief or personage had chosen the stone, that Christian missionaries had made sacred, for his monument. Although of late years much study and attention have been given to the inscribed stones of Wales and Ireland, yet the fact of the Christianizing the stones has not, so far, had much attention paid to it, and no attempt has been made to consider if the dates of the symbols of Christianity synchronize with those of the inscription; nor whether the stones with bilingual inscriptions have both inscriptions of the same date. In some cases it may be impossible to raise any question; in others, this may

[1] *Tripartite Life*, p. 127.

possibly be the solution of what has been a great difficulty.

For instance, the celebrated stone of Cadvan, now at Towyn (in a Brythonic part of Wales, it is true), is one of the few stones that possesses a Welsh inscription. One of the difficulties of the inscription is that on two sides of the stone, at the beginning of the inscription, crosses are found. Westwood is of opinion[1] that the crosses are placed to show that each line before which a cross appears is the beginning of a distinct inscription to the memory of a different individual, and in this view he is confirmed by Williams (*Ab Ithel*). There has been a good deal of very ingenious speculation whether the lines which begin without a cross are a continuation of the opposite inscription carried over the top of the stone, or a continuation of the inscription on the side of the stone. It may well be that neither view is right, but that the stone is one of those that was treated in the same way as the Irish stones mentioned in the *Tripartite Life*, and Christianized, so that the crosses have nothing to do with the inscription, but were added afterwards. So far, no one seems to have thoroughly studied the Welsh stones, with a view to ascertain and classify the dates of the Christian symbols used on them, notably the various forms of cross. That these are very varied is plain, and it is probable that they are of different dates; but whether the date of the inscription and the date of the symbol are the same or different, is a question which requires further study, and is one of some difficulty, but of great importance.

Whatever may be the ultimate conclusion on this point, the inscribed and sculptured stones go far to prove that, while in the Goidelic districts there exists on the sepulchral

[1] "Notes on St. Cadvan's Stone", *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 1850, pp. 90–100; *Lapidarium Walliæ*, p. 158.

monuments a general identity of religious ideas, yet there is also great local variation in those ideas. Westwood has pointed out[1] that the Welsh stones exhibit peculiarities of their own, when compared with the other stones of the United Kingdom. In Ireland, except on the great crosses, ornament is but sparingly used, and the rule is that the inscriptions are in Irish. In Wales the stones are often ornamented, but the ornament hardly ever contains any attempt to represent either human or animal figures, while the inscriptions are written in debased Roman letters, usually in Latin, and in a peculiar form. In Scotland the stones are profusely ornamented, human figures and figures of animals are often introduced, but inscriptions are rare. In the Isle of Man the stones are elaborately ornamented, while the inscriptions are in Runic or Norse.

This difference in the monuments of the dead furnishes important evidence that each different locality, where the Celtic Church existed, had and retained its own peculiarities. There was no hard and fast rule securing a general conformity; local customs and local ideas prevailed. What was the case with the stone monuments was probably the case in other matters; each locality, each tribe, did as they thought right, with the result that, while the principle remained the same, the mode of its application varied.

The evidence of the inscribed stones goes still further. The post-Roman inscriptions hardly occur in what was the country of the Ordovices (that is, in Brythonic Wales, Merionethshire) but crowd together in the Goidelic tract between the Clwyd, the Dee, and the Mawddach, in North Wales, and in the Goidelic parts of South Wales.[2] The South Wales stones form two groups—an eastern, around a

[1] Preface to *Lapidarium Walliæ*, p. iv.

[2] *Celtic Britain*, 244.

line drawn from Brecon to Neath; a western, in the district west of the Towy. These groups are capable of sub-divisions, such as from the nature of the inscription and the quantity of ornament. Each of these sub-divisions run into districts, thus further bearing evidence to the fact that the different tribes carried out the general religious principle according to their own local ideas. It would be beyond the purpose of this book to go in any detail into the question of the inscribed stones, but one peculiarity should be noticed in the character of the inscriptions. The Goidels appear to have written their inscriptions in a peculiar character; these characters are known as Oghams, and, so far as has yet been ascertained, the use of this character is with very few exceptions[1] confined to Goidelic districts—Cornwall, Devonshire, South Wales, the Goidelic part of North Wales, and the south and west of Ireland. In a number of instances the stones have a bilingual inscription of Ogham and Latin; and it is very often the case that the inscription takes the peculiar Welsh form of first mentioning the name of the individual, then making some addition to it. Westwood[2] cites as a typical case a stone at Cilgerran, in Pembrokeshire, inscribed with Ogham and Latin inscriptions, "*Trenegussi filii Macutreni hic jacet.*" The Ogham inscription has merely the name, the "*hic jacet*" occurs in the Latin only. The early inscriptions would mostly consist of merely what was wanted to identify and connect the stone with some particular individual, and this is what is met with in the Goidelic characters, the Oghams, so the stone may be either Christian or Pagan. Later, a second inscription was added in Latin. This was not merely a Latin reproduction of the Ogham, but something

[1] The most remarkable instance to the contrary is the Ogham stone found at Silchester; see *Archæologia*, vol. liv, p. 233.

[2] *Lapidarium Walliæ*, preface, p. iv.

more. Mr. Romilly Allen thinks[1] that an inscription on a monument shows it to be Christian, but it seems that this statement should be qualified by saying that the mere inscription of the name of a person does not necessarily imply that the monument is Christian, but that this may be implied if there is, as is so often the case in bilingual monuments, any addition to the name.

It is also a fact to be noticed that the bilingual stones, that is, all with Ogham and Latin inscriptions, are, with but very few exceptions, confined to that part of South Wales that was under the rule of Cunedda and his sons—Cardigan, Carmarthen, and Pembroke. The total number for Wales is twenty;[2] no less than fifteen of them are in the three counties mentioned, and three of the remaining five in the adjoining county of Brecon. Pembrokeshire possesses nine of the bilingual monuments; when it is remembered that Pembrokeshire was the great scene of David's labours, the figures bear out the view that David carried out in Wales the same policy that Patrick carried out in Ireland, and Christianized the Pagan stones by causing some additions to be made to them. In Ireland, out of one hundred and eighty-seven stones with Ogham characters, only two have bilingual inscriptions, but twenty-three have crosses cut upon them. Mr. Brash is of opinion that the crosses were cut on the stones long after the inscriptions were placed upon them. Mr. Romilly Allen differs from this view,[3] and alleges that there is no sufficient evidence to prove it. This last view is correct in a sense—there is really no evidence either way, it is all conjecture; but the conjecture is a reasonable one, having

[1] *Monumental History*, p. 65.

[2] This number has been increased by recent discoveries, but the new stones rather strengthen the argument.

[3] *Monumental History*, p. 79.

regard to what we know of Celtic customs, and the facts stated in Patrick's life.

It is also possible to go a step further: the absence of bilingual inscriptions on the Irish stones is a remarkable fact, the absence of ornament on the Welsh stones is one equally remarkable. There must be some explanation of these striking features. It is not an unfair explanation to say that the difference is due to the local variation of the same idea. In Ireland, the mark that the stone had become Christianized, was the addition of the sacred symbol, while in Wales it was the addition of a Latin inscription and the cessation of ornament. Both had the same meaning; both were used to signify the same result, but the local customs of the two localities differed, and made the inhabitants use different modes of expressing the same thing.

The next matter for consideration is, in what way was Christianity established in the Goidelic countries. There is no definite account of this for England and Wales, and reliance has to be placed on inference from what is stated to have been the case in Ireland. Here the ancient laws of Ireland give us most valuable help. From the time, whenever it was, that the *Senchus Mor* was compiled down to the eleventh century, the Irish law tracts give glimpses of early Irish ecclesiastical organization. The Irish lawyers held that the law of the Church should follow, as far as possible, the law of the land. The two bodies, the tribe of the land and the tribe of the Saint, stood side by side, neither admitting the superiority of the other, but each to a certain extent being dependent upon the other. Ultimately the ecclesiastical element gained the preponderence; the story of the mode in which Christianity was established in Ireland is the story of how that preponderence was brought about. It is a matter of dispute

when the most important of the Irish law books, the *Senchus Mor*, was compiled. Some perfervid Celts say by Patrick himself, or, if not, under his own supervision, and they give the date of the compilation as early as from 438 to 441. Dr. Todd, however, asserts,[1] that in its present form the *Senchus Mor* cannot be of so remote a date. Whatever date is accepted, there can be no doubt that in the *Senchus Mor* the opinions, traditions, and beliefs of the early Irish as to the introduction of Christianity into Ireland are recorded. It is by far the oldest record we possess that gives any account of how Christianity was introduced into Ireland. The introduction, which purports to give an account of this, makes the following statement. The right of saying what the law was, and of deciding in cases of dispute, had become exclusively vested in a class known as poets or Druids; they kept the knowledge of the law so entirely to themselves that, in time, their decisions became unintelligible to the ordinary tribesman. "Obscure, indeed, was the language," says the *Senchus Mor*, "that the poets spake at the disputations at Emhain Macha between the two sages Ferceirtne, the poets, and Neidhe, son of Adhna, son of Uither, for the sage's gown which Adhna, son of Uither, had possessed. Obscure, indeed, was the language that the poets spake, and it was not plain to the chieftains what judgment they had passed. 'These men,' said the chieftains, 'have their judgments and their knowledge to themselves. We do not, in the first place, understand what they say.' 'It is evidently the case,' said Conchobhar, 'all shall partake of it from this day forth, but the part of it that is fit for these poets shall not be taken from them, each shall have his share of it.' The poets were then deprived of the judicature, except their proper share

[1] *St. Patrick*, p. 484.

of it, and each of the men of Erin took his own part of the judicature. . . . It was at this time the chiefs of the men of Erin agreed on the measure of pleading times, breathings, and speech, and to be allowed to each according to his dignity."[1]

This account, whatever else we may think of it, refers to a remarkable change in early Irish society. In the earliest times the king or chieftain was at once the leader of the host, and the judge. Gradually the royal authority decayed, and the power of the king was usurped by the council of chiefs; the name of king did not disappear, but his authority became a mere shadow. He subsided into an hereditary general, a functionary. The dominant order, a number of families united by assumed relationship in blood, laid claim to a quasi sacred character. The king ceased to act as judge, and the judicial powers became exercised by a class who claimed to be exclusively entitled to do this as part of their privileges. A further change took place, like that described in the text. A further division of power was made; the priests were deprived of the judicial power, and this passed into the hands of another group of families, the lawyers. The two classes continued distinct. The priestly class, the Druids, confined themselves to sacred or magical rites; the legal class, the Brehons, took upon themselves to say, in all disputed cases, what the law really was.

The exact position of the Brehons was a somewhat peculiar one. In all disputes they were the universal referees; but they were something more. They alone were supposed to have the power to say what the law was—a power they pretended they derived from supernatural sources. Patrick, when present, did not venture to say what the law was, but left that to be declared by the Brehons. They were

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i, 19.

not judges in our sense of the term, nominees of the crown, exercising a power delegated to them by the crown; they were a family or families of hereditary law advisers attached to each tribe, and who had the hereditary right of deciding causes, because they had the hereditary privilege of supernatural aid in doing it. The *Senchus Mor* informs us how the Irish knew if the Brehons decided rightly. "When the Brehons deviated from the truth of nature there appeared blotches on their cheeks, as, first of all, on the right cheek of Sen Mac Aige, whenever he pronounced a false judgment, but they disappeared again when he had passed a true judgment. . . . When Fachtna had passed a false judgment, if in the time of früit, all the fruit in the territory in which it happened fell off in one night; if in the time of milk, the cows refused their calves. But if he passed a true judgment, the fruit was perfect on the trees. Sencha Mac Aililla never pronounced a false judgment without getting three permanent blotches on his face for each judgment. Morann never pronounced judgment without having a chain round his neck; when he pronounced a false judgment, the chain tightened round his neck, if he passed a true one, it expanded down upon him."[1]

The system was, therefore, a group of men who were supposed to be the sole depositaries of learning, who probably alone could recite the verses that embodied the legal rules, who professed to decide all questions in dispute by virtue of their knowledge and supernatural powers. The people could see the result for themselves of the Brehon judgments. These were "the outward visible signs of the inward spiritual grace." The poets also claimed supernatural powers. The *Senchus Mor* gives an instance. A poet is supposed to explain things by the extent of his

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i, 25.

knowledge. "He placed his staff on the person's head or body, and found out his name, and the name of his father and mother, and discovered any unknown thing that was proposed to him in a minute, or two, or three. And this is Teinm Laegha, or Imbas Forosna, for the same thing used to be revealed by means of these, but they were performed after a different manner, *i.e.*, a different kind of offering was made at each."[1] It is also stated that if the poets gave a false judgment, they lost their honor price, and were deprived of their profession and were unable to perform Teinm Laegha or Imbas Forosna.[2] Such seems to have been the state of Ireland at the time of Patrick's mission. The chieftain, surrounded by three classes or groups of families, his Druids, his poets, and his Brehons, each claimed supernatural powers, each relied on supernatural help to aid them to discharge their duties. According to the *Senchus Mor* there were only three classes of people who "could speak in public, in Erin—a chronicler to relate events; a poet, to eulogize and satirize; a Brehon, to pass sentence from the precedents and commentaries."[3]

The gloss on the *Senchus Mor* contains some very curious passages in its account of the old authors whose opinions made up the Brehon laws. The first Cai is said to have gone to Egypt, witnessed the plagues, and saw that it was by superior knowledge the Israelites overcame the Egyptian Druids, so Cai went with Moses. Obviously, this gives us a clue to the scene at Tara. The compiler of the account had Moses and the Egyptians in his mind, and framed his story of it on the Mosaic narrative of the plagues of Egypt. From the account of Connla Cainbhrethach, it would seem that there were admittedly Christians in Ireland before the time of Patrick. He was chief doctor in Connaught, and

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i, p. 45. [2] *Ibid.*, 25. [3] *Ibid.*, 19.

was filled with the grace of the Holy Ghost, so that he excelled the men of Erin in wisdom. He used to contend with the Druids as to who made heaven and earth, the sea, the sun and the moon, and challenged them to alter the regular order of things. When they admitted they had no power over the elements he said, "It is better for us to put our faith in Him who established all these things, the God of heaven and earth. Different,—different is the strength and manifold power of the Son of God, which claim not ye for yourselves. Do not boast of your power, for you have not even the power to change the order of one day or one night."[1] It is questioned whether Connla was a Christian or not; the passage may safely be read that he was, for if not, it is difficult to see the reason for his lecturing the Druids. Such was the state of heathen Ireland. The *Senchus Mor* gives the story as to how Patrick converted it to the faith: "Patrick came to Erin to baptize, and to disseminate religion among the Gäeidhill, in the ninth year of the reign of Theodosius, and in the fourth year of the reign of Laeghaire, the son of Niall, king of Erin.[2] . . . The number of companions with whom Patrick is said to have come into Erin was seven score and ten persons, or one score and ten persons."[3]

It also appears from the *Senchus* there were two bishops among Patrick's followers, Benen and Cairnech, usually supposed to be the Saint Benignius and Saint Cairnech. These names, coupled with Patrick's, are a little remarkable, and give a slight clue as to where the missionaries came from who went to Ireland with Patrick. Benignius was an Irishman living near Dulcek, and one of Patrick's favourite disciples, and is said to have been his successor in

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i, p. 23. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 5. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

the See of Armagh, in 455; but there is very little evidence of this. Cairnech was a Cornish man, who subsequently became a Welsh ecclesiastic, and is said, in a passage in the *Annals of the Four Masters*,[1] which gives the list of persons most closely connected with Patrick, to have been the priest who baptized him. According to the Welsh account he was grandson of Ceredig, and a place on the Cardiganshire coast, Llangranog, still bears his name. He is said to have followed Patrick to Ireland and changed his name to Cernach, and to have converted whole districts of Irishmen, after the failure to do so of troops of missionaries. The presence of Cairnech with Patrick lends some probability to the view that Patrick's mission to Ireland started from Wales. Patrick had been labouring for some time in Ireland before the event that led to its conversion took place at Nithnemunnach, near Tara, so called from a poisonous drink which was given there to Patrick by one of the Druids, "and this was revealed to Patrick, and thereupon Patrick pronounced these words over the liquor:—

> "'Imber fis fri ibu fis ibu anfis,
> Fris bru natha ibu lethu Christi Jesu.'

And whoever pronounced these words over poison or liquor shall receive no injury from it. Or it was the prayer beginning *In nomine Dei Patris, etc.*, he then composed and pronounced over the liquor."[2] This incident of the poison seems to have directed attention to Patrick, and Laeghaire was desirous of killing Patrick or one of his people, possibly in order to test still further his supernatural powers. The king's brother, Nuada Derg, who was in confinement, offered, if released, to kill Patrick. He was made to give pledges to keep his promise;

[1] First division, vol. i, pp. 138, 139. [2] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i, 3

a troop of horsemen was given him, and he set out to slay the Saint. Riding down to meet the cleric, he hurled his lance at him; it missed Patrick, but killed his charioteer Odhran. The *Senchus Mor* goes on, "and the cleric (Patrick) was angered, and raised up his hand towards the Lord and remained in the attitude of prayer, with his hands crossed; and there came a great shaking, and an earthquake at the place, and darkness came upon the sun, and there was an eclipse, and they say that the gate of hell was then opened, and that Temhair was being overturned, and thus it was that Temhair became inclined. And the Lord ordered him to lower his hands to obtain judgment for his servant who had been killed, and told him he would get his choice of the Brehons in Erin, and he consented to this as God had ordered him. And the choice he made was to go according to the judgment of the royal poet of the island of Erin, Dubhthach mac na Lugair, who was a vessel full of the grace of the Holy Ghost. From this is derived the custom that whenever a person comes over the sea to prosecute his cause, he shall have his choice of the Brehons in Erin; and when he shall come across the boundaries of a province, he shall have the choice of the Brehons in the province. And the thing was given to Dubhthach, and he said: 'It is severe in thee, O cleric, to say this to me; it is irksome to me to be in this cause between God and man; for if I say that the deed is not to be atoned for by *eric fine*, it shall be evil for thy honor, and thou wilt not deem it good, and if I say that *eric fine* is to be paid, and that it is to be avenged, it will not be good in the sight of God; for what thou hast brought with thee into Erin is the judgment of the Gospel, and what it contains is perfect forgiveness of every evil by each neighbour to the other.' What was in Erin before this was the judgment of the law, *i.e.*, retaliation, a foot for a

foot, an eye for an eye, and life for life. 'Well, then,' said Patrick, 'what God will give for utterance say it. It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.' Patrick then blessed his mouth and the grace of the Holy Ghost alighted on his utterance, and he pronounced the judgment."[1]

The judgment is given in the verses beginning "It is the strengthening of Paganism"; according to the gloss, "it enumerates four things—obedience from all who are sued, their choice to all who are sued, for here Patrick was given his choice, Brehon, and his demand from the men of Erin." The verses contain a reference to the idea that a wrong judgment brought out blotches on the cheek:—

> "It shall be proved by my cheeks
> That I will not stain their white honor,
> I shall pass a sound judgment."[2]

And the verses conclude with Dubhthach's decision:—

> "I pronounce the judgment of death—
> Of death for his crime to any one who kills,
> Nuada is adjudged to Heaven,
> And it is not to death he is adjudged."[3]

The gloss says, "Thus the two laws were fulfilled, the culprit was put to death for his crime, and his soul was pardoned and sent to heaven. . . . There is forgiveness in that sentence, and there is also retaliation." It then goes on to point out the way that the Brehons evaded inflicting the punishment of death in cases of homicide. "At this day we keep between forgiveness and retaliation, for at the present day no one has the power of bestowing heaven as Patrick had that day, so no one is put to death for his intentional crime as long as *eric fine* is obtained, and whenever *eric fine* is not obtained, he is put to death for his intentional crime."[4] The result of the contest was

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i, 8. [2] *Ibid.*, 10. [3] *Ibid.*, 13. [4] *Ibid.*, 15.

that an assembly of the men of Erin was held, who, when they heard of Patrick's mighty works and saw the king and his Druids overcome by great signs and miracles wrought in their presence, bowed down in obedience to the will of God and of Patrick.

Such was the so-called conversion of Ireland by Patrick. It shows at once the extent of his success and of his failure. His power of working miracles impressed the Celtic mind; they recognized him as the most powerful of the dealers in the supernatural, therefore to be appeased and conciliated to the extent of a human sacrifice being offered if he should require it. But beyond this, they would not go. According to Celtic ideas homicide was not,—it might almost be said under certain conditions, is not—a crime. It was an injury to property, and had to be paid for as such, but that was all. This idea, although opposed to all Christian teaching, was too firmly fixed in the Celtic mind to be affected by their Christianity. In spite of all the efforts of Patrick, in spite of all the attempts of the early Christian missionaries, the Irish Celts continued to regard homicide not as "a crime but as a blunder". The limits of their Christianity were marked out by the fact if the murderer could pay or could not. If he was rich and powerful enough to pay the price, a man might commit what murders he pleased; but if he was poor and unable to pay, or make good the damage caused by his act, then he might be punished, or rather the injured relations might take their vengeance in the only way left to them, by the murderer's life. This failure of the Christian shows clearly how very slight was the influence that Christianity had on the Celtic mind, and the difficulties that beset the early missionaries. The native Irish did not object to Christianity as long as it was confined to giving them the most powerful super-

natural aid then possible, but if it began to interfere with their customs and ideas, they would have none of it. The Christian missionaries on finding out this accepted the inevitable, with the result that the teaching of the Church was subservient to the maintenance of the old Celtic tribal ideas. This account of the conversion of Ireland differs widely from the popular idea. There is no acceptance of the truth of the Christian faith, no teaching the doctrine of the Trinity by aid of the shamrock, no real change in the habits and customs of the Irish. It may be said that Christianity was established, and, in the sense that the Irish chieftain adopted the Christian priest as chief wizard, it was so, but it went no further. All that the converts did or intended to do was to appease Patrick, and utilize the powers that enabled him to do his mighty works. There was no change in either sentiments, or habits, or ideas. Had there been, it was quite impossible for some of the ideas and observances that continued among the Irish to have been tolerated. Perhaps the best instance of this is that of Loeghair. Christian as he called himself, he was at heart a Pagan, and on his departure on the foray against Leinster, which ended in his death, the old heathen recalled with affection the tribal custom of burial, and directed that in spite of Patrick and his teaching he should be buried like his ancestors on the ramparts of the fort, girt in his armour, with his weapons by his side ready for the combat, his face turned to Leinster, the home of his hereditary foes, where their chief, similarly buried, would be both ready and willing on the morning of the day of judgment to renew the combat, "because of the endurance of their hatred".[1]

[1] *Book of Armagh*, fol. 10, "pro duribate odiui"; W. Stokes says the meaning is, "on account of the hardness with which I have hated". See also Petrie's *Tara*, p. 113; Appendix to Rolls ed. of *Tripartite Life*, p. 567.

Paganism was practised long after the so-called conversion of the Irish. The *Corus Bescna*, which is a much later tract than other parts of the Brehon laws, as it describes the Church in an advanced state of organization, speaks of "demon feasts" as things even then by no means unknown. It defines them as banquets given "to sons of death and bad men, to heathens and harlots, to bad people in general".[1]

Probably the best account of the change the conversion of Ireland brought about is the one given in the *Senchus Mor* itself, in describing the way the poets worked before and after the intervention of Patrick.[2] "When the poet sees the person or thing before him, he makes a verse at once with the ends of his fingers, or in his mind, without studying, and he composes and repeats at the same time; and this is after the reception of the New Testament. But this is not the way it was done before Patrick's time, then the poet placed his staff upon the person's body, or upon his head, and found out his name and the name of his father and mother, and discovered every unknown thing that was proposed to him in a minute, or two, or three, and this in Teinn Laegha and Innis Forosna, for the same thing used to be revealed by means of them, but they were performed after a different manner, *i.e.*, a different kind of offering was made at each. But Patrick abolished these three things among the poets when they believed, as they were profane, for the Teinn Laegha and Innis Forosna could not be performed by them without offering to idol gods. He did not leave them after this any rite in which offerings should be made to the devil, for their profession was pure."[3] So it appears that Patrick forbade sacrifice to idols, and positive magical

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 25. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 45. [3] *Ibid.*, i, 45.

incantations, but what he allowed to be practised must have given the Druids or poets great scope for an appeal to the supernatural. "He left them extemporaneous recital, as it was acquired through knowledge and application; he left them the registering the genealogies of the men of Erin, and the artistic rules of poetry, and the Duibi solimste and Duibi fedha, and story telling, with lays. . . . The chief stories which they repeated treated of demolitions, cattle spoils, courtships, battles, killings, combats, elopements, grants, encampments, adventures, tragedies, and plunderings. . . . He left them also judgment in right of their profession. . . All these things were left to the poets, and Patrick told them to resign whatever honour they received in Erin when they performed these three rites, for that which they received in lieu of them was better than what they abandoned."[1]

These passages show with some certainty what the conversion of Ireland really was. The king and some of the chiefs became nominally Christians, not because they believed or professed to believe in the truths of Christianity, but because they considered it expedient to conciliate so powerful a dealer in the supernatural as Patrick had proved himself to be. The Christian teachers tried to get the rules as to homicide altered, but failed; yet the existing law underwent a so-called revision to carry out such minor changes as the adoption of Christianity made necessary, such as the abolition of open idolatry and recourse to magical rites. But this was the utmost limit of the change. The Druids still remained, but they now ceased to exercise their powers as magicians, becoming rather a literary than a religious body. The Brehons still remained and arbitrated as before on any disputed point that arose, and declared what the law, the

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i, 47.

revised law, was on the subject. But a new class or body was added to the existing classes, who took both from Druid and Brehon a portion of their old powers. The priests took from the Druids the priestly part of their duties, the part which consisted of dealings with the supernatural; they took from the Brehon the part that consisted in the supreme power of declaring what was the will of God, the law of the letter, the Gospel. They became a body of men whose work was to combine duties formerly exercised by Brehon and Druid, to look after the worship and religion of the tribe. The chief allowed them to settle on the tribal lands, to build shelters, to cultivate the lands for their support. They had to organize their society; and this they did on the same basis, and in accordance with the same ideas they found in force around them relating to the lay tribe, and thus they formed an organization or community of their own, which became known as the "tribe of the Saint". To each tribe that became Christian in name some such organization was attached. This process of having a colony of Christians attached to the tribe constituted the conversion of Ireland. In time, the Christians living apart under their own rules were considered a separate community, and their settlement became to be regarded as a monastery, or the monastic settlement of the tribe of the Saint. Conversion was an addition to, rather than an alteration in, the existing tribal customs; these remained much as before, except that idolatry and magic were no longer openly practised. The dislike of the people to any radical change is shown by their refusal to alter the law as to homicide at the suggestion of the Christian missionaries, and also from the fact that the Christian settlers introduced little that was novel in their organization, but followed the existing customs and

conformed to the ideas, the habits, and the customs then in force. When once the Christian missionaries were established or allowed to settle on the tribe land, there must have existed in the mind of the chief and the tribesmen a desire to propitiate such a powerful God as the God of the Christians had proved to be, and this propitiation was carried out through the Christian missionaries. To get what they wanted they had but to ask and threaten the vengeance of their God if refused. So it is not to be wondered at if the colonies of Christians soon became important and powerful. Monasteries arose, that is, a collection of huts in which the Christians and their adherents dwelt with their wives and families, not so much from any idea of the duty or holiness of living together, or any such ecclesiastical notion, but from the necessity for purposes of safety, and to ensure immunity in case of war or invasion. Wild and savage as the Irish were, they might well pause when raiding the settlements of the tribe before they attacked the tribe of the Saint. Security and protection far more than anything else led to the first formation of the system of dwelling together, which developed into monasteries. The settlements or colonies had some recognized head, probably the priest, who remained in the colony, while the missionaries went from tribe to tribe to found new colonies, that is, to convert the country. As time went on, the resident priest when the settlement developed into a monastery, developed into an abbot, or the head of the monastery. This state of things is recognized in the catalogue of the Saints of Ireland, where it is stated that the first order of Saints, from the conversion of the country till about 543, did not reject the society and help of the women. The Christians seemed to have all lived together with their wives and families. It was not until a much later stage in the

development of the church, that the members of the tribe of the Saint altered their mode of living.

When the conversion of Ireland is spoken of, it should be remembered that all that is meant by the expression is, that in a number of the Irish tribes the chiefs had recognized the expediency of calling in the aid of Christian priests, and to secure them had allowed the establishment of settlements of Christians on the land of the tribe. Each of these settlements was independent of the other; each grew up in accordance with its own ideas of what was right; such ideas, generally, being based upon and following the lines of the organization of the tribe to which the settlement belonged. Such, if it can be called a church, was the church that Patrick founded; probably these different collections of Christians, while Patrick lived, gave him some nominal adherence as their supreme head. Even if they did, the system contained all the elements of decay, and was bound to relapse into a semi, if not wholly, Pagan state. If anything kept them together, it would be the personal influence of Patrick; but this influence was on the wane even in Patrick's life. In his letter, written towards the close of his life, to the chief Coroticus, Patrick seems to recognize the failure of his work, and the gradual relapse into Paganism. He complains of companies of Scots and apostate Picts; men who were parricides and fratricides, ravening wolves, eating up the Lord's people as they eat bread; ravening wolves who have devoured the Lord's flock, which was increasing rapidly in Ireland.[1] Indeed, the whole letter is the wail, the mournful wail, of a man who, looking back on his life's work, sees it to all appearance to be a failure, and the Christianity he had laboured to establish, falling under the assaults of the Pagans. No longer do the

[1] See Appendix to Rolls ed. *Tripartite Life of Patrick*, ii. p. 375.

Christian priests retain their supremacy, for no longer are they able to deter offenders by their appeals to the supernatural. It would not be right to place too much stress on the inflated language of an angry disappointed man; but after making every allowance for these feelings, and for ecclesiastical exaggeration, no one carefully reading the epistle but will see that the Irish at heart were as Pagan as ever they had been.

Although, unfortunately, there is no account of the conversion of Wales to the faith, like that of Ireland, yet there can be little doubt that the process in the two countries was very similar. There were contests between Christian priests and Pagan wizards; the Christian priests triumphed, and the people desiring to be on the side of the strongest supernatural workers, came over to the Christians, as they had in Ireland. The incident in the life of David, of his contest with Boia, is clearly an account of a contest of the same nature as that of Patrick with the Druids at Tara. Unfortunately, David's life has been so often revised and re-written, that the Boia incident has been edited out of all meaning, but it was originally a relation of the triumph of David over the Pagan magicians. Probably David's victory was followed by the establishment of Christian colonies in Wales, in precisely the same way as Patrick's was by the establishment of Christian colonies in Ireland. In the next glimpses we get of Welsh ecclesiastical history these colonies are found to be in existence. Probably in the conversion of Wales there was the same process of recognizing and assimilating Paganism as in Ireland, and in this way the customs and habits of the heathen inhabitants found their way into the Welsh Church, and became the origin of many of her peculiarities. The story of the conversion of Ireland, as already given from the *Senchus Mor*, probably furnishes

the key to much of the early Welsh history. It should, however, be borne in mind that, as far as we know, there would be a greater scope for local peculiarities in Wales than in Ireland, for no one person ever had over the whole of Wales even the nominal control attributed to Patrick in Ireland. All the Welsh Saints were local, and had no general influence over Wales, or even over the larger part. So the religious colonies would be more independent, and would, from the want of any control or supervision, follow more and more the local customs and organization, that is, would be more and more permeated with Paganism. One instance of the difference between the two countries will be seen in the position of the Druids and the Bards in Wales, as compared with the Druids and Brehons in Ireland, after the establishment of Christianity. In both Ireland and Wales the Druid and Brehon, or Druid and Bard, lost part of the power which the Christian priest acquired. But the Welsh Druid never took the place that the Irish Druid did after the establishment of Christianity. In Ireland, both Druid and Brehon continued for some time to exercise their restricted rights; the Brehon lingered on to a comparatively modern date. But in Wales, while the Bards continued, the Druid dropped at once into the position of a second rate magician, and gradually lost all power and influence. Even his greatest admirers at the present day only say that the Druid continued as guardian of local traditions, but without any real power or authority.

The Christian colonies being established on the territories of the different Welsh tribes, the results following such establishment have to be considered. Here the distinction between the races inhabiting Wales must be kept in mind. The Brython received Christianity and really became Christian, that is, all his customs, habits,

and institutions were affected and modified by it; but there does not seem to be any real enthusiasm in the matter. Bede makes it one of the grounds of his complaint against the Celts that they took no steps to convert the heathen Saxons:—"Nunquam genti Saxonum sive Anglorum secum Britanniam incolenti verbum fidei prædicandum committerent."[1] So far as the Brython is concerned this is true; but with the Goidel a different result followed. It took longer for Christianity to make any impression with them, or in any way to modify their ideas, but when once Christianity got hold of the Goidel it seems to have changed his nature. He became the most zealous and enthusiastic of Christians. It was the Goidelic Celts who sent forth Columba to Scotland, Columbanus to Burgundy, and who came to regard missionary effort as almost the greatest duty of a Christian Church. This fact is also brought out by the modes that were used to confirm Christianity in Ireland. All the efforts for this purpose seem to have been made from Wales, and all such efforts were made from Goidelic Wales. From the Rheidol to the Mawddach, that is, the strip of the coast of Brythonic Wales, neither history nor legend assert that any expedition went, or was attempted to be sent, to check the spread of Paganism in Ireland. But cross over to Goidelic Cardiganshire, the whole coast there teems with legends and traces of Irish expeditions. Llangrannog commemorates the Welsh Saint of the *Senchus Mor*, Llansantfraidd, the great Irish Saint, Bridget. If there is in all this much that is doubtful, one thing is certain, the close connection that existed between Ireland and Pembrokeshire. Going to the Goidelic part of Wales north of the Mawddach, the connection with Ireland is still kept up. Bardsey was a sacred spot both to Wales

[1] *Hist. Eccl.*, i, 22.

and Ireland; Gildas is said to have given a form of mass to Ireland in conjunction with David and Cadoc. Why the strip of Merionethshire and North Cardiganshire coast should alone have no Irish legend or tradition connected with it is a curious fact, and the explanation that it was the only piece of Brythonic coast does not seem unreasonable, when it is borne in mind that the Brythons were not formed of the stuff out of which the early Celtic missionaries were made. The same explanation holds good to the north. Lancashire was Brythonic; from it no help went to Ireland or to Man; but on reaching the Goidelic coast of Cumbria and Strathclyde, we are again in the midst of legends and tradition of missionary efforts. When the history of the labours of Ninian and his followers is investigated and written, it will be found that no Goidelic coast has sent forth more missionaries than Cumbria and Strathclyde.

Whatever Christianity might in time have done for the Brython we shall never know; the Pagan Saxons stamped out the Brythonic Christianity, and when Christianity again gained the ascendant it was by the labours and efforts of Latin monks. The history of Christianity among the Brythonic Celts is not therefore so important as it otherwise would be. The case of the Goidelic Celts is different. From the first establishment of Christianity in Wales, whenever the date may have been, Goidelic Wales has always been nominally Christian. Ireland relapsed certainly once, and probably more than once, into Paganism. Scotland, except in certain places, was only nominally Christian. But Wales, certainly from the end of the fourth century, has never nominally relapsed into heathendom. Probably this was because the establishment of Christianity, being on the Irish lines of tribal settlements, and those settlements being left to themselves, the

Welsh Christians absorbed practically the whole of the existing customs of the Goidelic Celts, and called this mixture Christianity. They did not relapse, as there was nothing for them to relapse into, as their Christianity was only a modified form of Paganism. Hence it is that the local customs of Wales have survived so long—because they became a part of what then passed for Christianity, and so their existence was assured. This adherence to local customs and beliefs gave the great vitality she possessed to the Welsh Church, and enabled her to resist, and resist with success for so long a period, the assaults of Rome. This state of things could only have arisen by some such system as that already described of Christian colonies growing up with, and being identical in organization and habits with, the tribe. It may not have been a system calculated to produce a high standard of Christian life, but it produced a very enduring form of Christianity, and one that was probably the only form that could have endured under the conditions it had to meet with. It is true that this is not the idea that is popularly stated as to the state of Christianity in Wales during the continuance of Saxon Paganism. Wales is said to have received Christianity in the same way as the rest of the island, whatever that may have been, Welsh Bishops are said to have attended the Council of Arles, a matter as to which there is no real evidence.[1] Wales is said to have developed a heresy, or at least to have produced a heretic who shook the Church to her foundations, and only by means of Germanus and Lupus was she won back to the faith. Except the heresy, the rest of the popular idea has very little, if any, evidence to support it, but it is not easy to see why, if the popular view is taken,

[1] See Mr. Haverfield's article in the *English Historical Review*, July 1896.

in Wales alone the Christian faith, as we understand it, should have been preserved.

That Christianity did exist during that period is clear, but it was neither Latin Christianity nor the faith of St. Germanus, it was the native customs glossed over with a thin coating of what was called Christianity that survived, and formed the faith of the Christian settlements in Wales. The revival of Christianity by Augustine, in 597, and his work among the Pagan Saxons, mark a new departure in the evangelization of the country. So far as can now be gathered, it appears doubtful if Augustine expected to find any form of Christianity in Britain. That on reaching the Severn to find that the wild country to the west of that river called itself Christian, caused him some surprise, is shown by his writing to Rome for instructions how to deal with these Christians,—nothing of the kind forming part of his original orders. He seems inclined to have treated them much in the same way a modern Anglican priest would treat a Coptic Christian; and if Welsh Christianity had in it more of Paganism than of Christianity, Augustine's treatment of the Welsh Abbots is not to be wondered at. But it must be remembered that our authority for this treatment is only Bede and mediæval legend, and its accuracy is not above suspicion. Probably Augustine felt able to cope with Paganism, pure and simple, but his difficulty, and the point on which he wanted the Papal orders, was how to deal with the Paganized Christianity he met with in Wales.

As has been said, the Christian colonies on the tribal land adopted the ideas and habits of the tribe to which they were attached, and, as they were free from external control, they would of necessity gradually advance more and more in the direction of Paganism. This tendency, from

the isolation produced by the Saxon conquest of England, would tend to increase; from the English border nothing came to Wales to help to maintain a Christian standard or a Christian ideal. The Christianity of the Welsh became more national, that is, more Pagan, as time went on. But there was one source from which Welsh Christianity was recruited, if legend is to be trusted—Brittany. The relation between Wales and Brittany is one of the most difficult parts of the history of the Celtic Church. The visits of Breton Saints to Wales doubtless had some effect in keeping up Christianity, but it is by no means clear that the Christianity of the Bretons was of a very high order. Whatever it was, this system of tribal Christian colonies had become too firmly rooted among the Welsh to be really affected by it, except in some lesser details; for the union of tribal customs and Christianity had become a part of the Welsh nature, and has left its trace even to our own day. Speaking of Ireland, and the observation equally applies to Wales, an Irish writer could say, with truth: "Much of the half Pagan, half Christian religion will be found not only in the Irish stories of the middle ages, but in the superstitions of the peasantry to the present day."[1] Not the least of the claims of Rees to the gratitude of Welsh scholars was his showing the importance in the ecclesiastical history of the country, of preserving and studying the ancient dates on which the local fairs were held, as furnishing some trace of the early beliefs of the Welsh as to the worship of the early Welsh Saints, and the superstitions attaching to them of lucky and unlucky days, and taking us back to a still more ancient time, and yet earlier customs.

It seems most likely that the resistance that Augustine encountered was not that he preached Christianity, but

[1] O'Donovan, *Four Masters*, A.D. 432.

that he preached a Christianity part of which was the total overthrow of the religion that then existed in Wales. It was not so much a matter of doctrine, or of Church government, as of the substitution of the Latin ideas of the Christian faith for the strange amalgamation of Christianity and Paganism which was the then existing religion. The Welsh were really fighting, not a battle for any particular form or ceremony, but the battle of a national against an alien church, and they have never yet received the credit they deserve in this struggle for religious freedom. Had Augustine succeeded, a dead level of uniformity would have spread over the country, stamped out the life of the Church, and altered the whole course of English history. Yet the men who stood up for their religion, and by their courage and perseverance resisted with success the bonds of Rome, are never noticed by modern Welsh nationalists, and English children are taught to look upon them as heretics and schismatics. In whatever light we may regard them, the fact remains, they successfully resisted Augustine and his missionaries. The Christian settlement of Wales was too firmly established to be overthrown; that settlement consisted in a Christian colony being established in each tribe, and which became identified with the tribe and part and parcel of it. The nature and organization of these colonies is the next point for consideration, but it cannot be too strongly insisted that each colony was independent, and owed no duty or obedience to any one outside the tribe. Both the tribe of the land and the tribe of the Saint were independent, there were no ecclesiastical authorities over the colonies as a whole, to enforce obedience or dictate discipline. Probably the Welsh Celt would have resented with equal bitterness and stubbornness any attempt to bring him into strict

conformity with the religion of the Scotch and Irish Celts, as he did the attempt to bring him into conformity with Rome. What he fought for was what is now expressed in the saying, "a free church in a free state"—for his own local religion, which, although peculiar, and to our ideas unorthodox, yet derived its strength from its peculiarity and unorthodoxy; and which, in spite of the pressure of all the hostile influences brought to bear upon it, has yet preserved traces of its existence even to our own day.

CHAPTER IV.

MONASTERIES.

THE one point, almost the only point, on which all writers on the Celtic Church, whatever their opinions, whether Celts or Catholics, are agreed is, that the great feature of that Church, wherever it was met with, was its intense affection for monasteries. Whether the Celtic Church is studied in Wales, Ireland, Scotland, or on the continent, monasticism is its distinguishing feature. Probably this unanimity of writers is more apparent than real, and is due to each using the word monastery in his own sense, without regarding the meaning placed upon it by the others. It is impossible to imagine anything more unlike a Celtic monastery than a Latin house; they differed in their origin, in their objects, and in their life. Each was the outcome of different systems and ideas, and all they had in common was, that the early Christians, whether Celts or Latins, had, for the purposes of safety and mutual protection, to live together.

With the fact of community of residence, any similarity between the two systems ends. The Latin considered that a life of holiness could be best led by a life of isolation, the Celt by a life of association, and in the monastic systems of the two Churches, each tried to carry out his ideas to their legitimate conclusion. To a certain extent each succeeded, at least, so far as to show that both systems, when really carried out in their entirety, could produce men who would be the glory of any Church,

and whom the rival system was incapable of producing. It is not likely that the Celts would ever have produced a Benedict, or the Latins a Columba. It is somewhat remarkable that each system was to a great degree the converse of the other. The Latin began by solitaries or hermits living alone, but afterwards being joined by others, and thus forming a religious community. These communities, in time, adopted a fixed rule of life, and became important and powerful corporations. The Celt began with a group of families forming a settlement on tribal land; they were associated for a definite purpose—defence; and their settlements included both sexes and all ages. Then came a change; women and children were got rid of, and the monastery became a collection of men living together, excluding from their settlements all women. Subsequently there came a third change; a solitary life was regarded as the highest form of piety, and the Celts rushed into solitude with all the fervour of the old anchorites of the desert. It is true that at one period of the Celtic Church a fixed rule was established, which rivalled for a time the rule of St. Benedict; but this rule, the rule of Columbanus, belongs more to the history of Celtic monks and monasteries abroad than in Ireland or Wales. Any universal rule, as this purported to be, was quite foreign to the early Celtic idea of monastic life, and never became accepted by the Celtic Church as a whole. Each Celtic house in this respect followed the example of the different local branches of the Celtic Church, and was a rule to itself, or, as an early account of the Celtic monks states, they had and practised "*diversæ regulæ*".[1] These differences arose from the fact that each settlement was originally independent, made its own rules and regulated its own proceedings.

[1] Ussher, *Catalogue of the Irish Saints*, vi, 477.

There was no supreme power over either the tribe of the land or the tribe of the Saint, to say what should be the organization or discipline of the settlement. Hence the divergencies and peculiarities.

This explanation, it is needless to say, is not the one generally given; but the usual one, though based on a different principle, does, in fact, come very near it, and ascribes all the divergencies, which cannot be denied, to the fact that the houses in Wales and Ireland were so far from the centres of religious life, so difficult of access, that it was impossible to ensure that the Benedictine rule was really carried out in them; thus the peculiarities arose from the rareness and difficulty of proper visitation, and the consequent laxity that grew up in the habits of the monks. But this assumes, what was not the fact, that all the monasteries in Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, had a Latin origin, and were subject to the rule of St. Benedict. That the peculiarities were the result of the absence of proper control may be admitted; the point at issue is, whether the Celtic monasteries in their origin were settlements of the original preachers of Christianity and their converts on the tribal land, or were they monasteries founded by Latin monks in accordance with the rule of St. Benedict? The existence of local peculiarities is not, and cannot be denied; the enormous effect the Celtic monasteries had on the establishment and spread of the Christian religion is admitted; the only point at issue is, whether Celtic monasticism is a native Celtic production or a debased form of the foreign, the Benedictine, system—Is it a Latin or a Celtic growth?

The Latin view is thus put forward by the great champion of that church, Montalembert;[1] after fully admitting the importance of the part played by monasteries in the

[1] *Moines d'Occident*, vol. iii, p. 9.

early history of Christianity in these islands, he says. "Nul peuple au monde n'a reçu la foi Chrétienne plus directement de l'Église Romaine et plus exclusivement par le ministère de moines. Si comme l'a dit un grand ennemi de Jésus Christ la France a été faite par les évêques, il est bien plus vrai encore que l'Angleterre Chrétienne a été faite par les moines. De tous les pays de l'Europe c'est celui qui a été le plus profondément labouré par le soc monastique. Ce sont les moines et les moines seuls, qui ont porté semé et cultivé dans cette ile fameuse la civilization Chrétienne; D'où venaient ces moines? De deux courants tres distinct de Rome, et de l'Irlande." At first sight it would appear that Montalembert recognizes the Celtic origin of the Welsh Church, but his view is that the Irish monks had their origin at Rome, and were by no means a native product, independent of Rome. He ascribes everything to Patrick, and relies on the legend that Pope Celestine sent Patrick to Ireland, and that Patrick as a Papal emissary converted Ireland to the faith. But this view of the case has not met with universal acceptance. One argument, that if not conclusive, goes a long way to negative it, is, that no trace of any such mission is to be found in the admitted writings of Patrick that have come down to us. In the Epistle to Coroticus, when most desirous of justifying himself for undertaking the conversion of Ireland, Patrick does not refer to a Papal authority, which would have been conclusive if he had had it, but relies on the Divine inspiration he had received for the work.[1] It is quite possible that the Latin monks of the ninth and tenth centuries who ascribed Patrick's mission to Celestine were jealous of the English claiming a direct connexion with Rome through Augustine, and

[1] See Todd, *St. Patrick*, 310; *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, by G. Stokes, p. 47.

also did not like to admit that the mission of Palladius, which ended in failure, was directed by the Pope, while that of Patrick, which succeeded, was not, and determined that therefore, so far as legend went, they should all start fair. As has been said, Montalembert admits the Irish, that is the Celtic, origin of some of the Welsh monasteries, so unless the fact of Pope Celestine sending Patrick to Ireland can be proved, Montalembert himself becomes a witness in favour of the view of the native origin of Celtic monasteries.

But the usual explanation of the origin of monasteries is not based upon Patrick, but upon Germanus, and is one that is certainly more plausible than the Celestine legend. On the monastic system spreading to the Western Church, it is to St. Martin of Tours the honour is usually ascribed of introducing it into France. In 361, he founded the House of Ligugé, near Poictiers, and in 372, that of Marmoutier, near Tours. So far the matter rests on historical ground, but then legend comes in. One view is that Patrick studied under St. Martin; another, that of Jocelyn, which Montalembert adopts—that Patrick's mother was St. Martin's neice. In various ways an attempt is made to connect Patrick with St. Martin. When Germanus came to England, in 429, to root out Pelagianism, Patrick, according to some accounts, came with him, according to others joined him in England, and was sent on to Ireland.

There is another version;[1] that on Germanus' arrival in Britain, while he was at St. Albans, Patrick came to consult him, and it was in consequence of this meeting that Patrick went to Rome, was consecrated by Pope Celestine, and sent to Ireland. Germanus went on from St. Albans towards Wales, and, when near the estuary of the Dee, a band of

[1] Newman's Life of St. Germanus in *Lives of English Saints*, p. 150.

Pictish pirates made one of their usual raids. The Welsh were desirous of obtaining the aid, the supernatural aid, of Germanus in the coming fight. As in Ireland the powers of Patrick produced the conversion of the Irish king, so now, the powers of St. Germanus were to produce the submission of the Welsh chiefs. The Hallelujah Victory secured the triumph of St. Germanus—the result of that triumph is said to have been the founding of the monasteries of Llancarvan and Llanilltyd, if not by St. Germanus himself, at least by his orders, and therefore under the direct power and authority of Rome. From these monasteries most of the other Welsh houses sprang; so the origin of Welsh monasticism is thus directly derived from Rome, and so proved not to be a native institution independent of Rome or external authority; while Patrick being sent on to Ireland proves the same thing for the Irish. If the legend had stopped here, it would have been more worthy of belief. The probable result of the victory of St. Germanus would be the founding of Christian settlements in Wales, as the result of Patrick's victory over the Tara Druids had been in Ireland. But the originator of the legend, or one of the transcribers, considered it his duty to make it complete, and by his additions casts a doubt on its genuineness; for it goes on to say that Germanus had as a pupil Paulinus, the great light of Llancarvan; that Germanus also consecrated Dubricius "Archbishop when elected by the king and the whole Diocese, and Germanus conferred the dignity upon him; they appointed him his Episcopal See with the consent of Meuricus, the king, the princes, the clergy, and the people at Llandaff, and dedicated the place to St. Peter the Apostle."[1]

If this last statement is true, St. Germanus was a

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, p. 66, old ed.

greater worker of miracles than even his most enthusiastic biographers venture to assert, for Dubricius must either have been consecrated a bishop before he was born, or have lived to an age that was supernatural. The date of the Hallelujah Victory is 430; of St. Germanus' death, 448; Dubricius died in 610. If he was born at the date of St. Germanus' death he was 162 when he died; if, however, he was consecrated bishop in 430, he must have been nearly 200 at his death. The fact of his being an archbishop is at least singular, still more so in the fact of the king and the *diocese* electing him. It is almost certain there were no such things as archbishops in Wales; it is quite certain there were at that date, 430, no fixed dioceses. The dedication of the Church of Llandaff to St. Peter did not take place until the twelfth century. Another difficulty with reference to Patrick is that it is said he was a pupil of St. Martin; that Saint died in 397. The earliest date given for Patrick's birth is 387; so at most Patrick was ten when St. Martin died. It is not impossible that a boy of ten was a pupil in a Gaulish monastery, particularly if there was a relationship between him and the head of it. But it is remarkable that the only point on which the different biographers of Patrick are agreed is, that he did not leave his home in Strathclyde before he was sixteen, that is, not until Martin had been six years in his grave. In dealing with miracle-working saints it may be wrong to criticise the legends by ordinary rules, but on no principle of historical evidence can the origin of Welsh monasteries, as deduced from the labours of Germanus, in the way it is told, be accepted as accurate. If monasticism did reach Ireland and Wales from Rome, as is alleged, some better proof than such legends as are usually brought forward in support of this view is required, before it is accepted as a fact, or regarded as more than a pious belief.

There is, however, another, and an exceedingly ingenious theory put forward by Mr. Skene.[1] It is more plausible, it is not improbable, and the dates do not render its authenticity questionable. It is really a combination of the Latin and Celtic views. All writers agree that about the close of the fourth century a British missionary to the Picts, Ninian, founded a settlement on the west side of Wigton Bay, where he built a *stone* church. So far it would be quite consistent with the Celtic view; having won over the local chief, he obtained leave to settle on the land of the tribe. The date of the settlement is about 396 or 397, as it is said that Ninian heard of St. Martin's death in 397, while building his church. Latin legends say that Ninian was a pupil of St. Martin at Marmoutier, and on his leaving there, Martin gave him some masons to show him how to build a church in Scotland in the Roman way, and that in return for this Ninian dedicated his church to St. Martin. Another version says that he studied at Rome, and was there ordained by the Pope, and sent to convert the Picts. This story has the support of Bede, who, speaking of Ninian says:[2] "Qui erat Romæ regulariter fidem et mysteria veritatis edoctus cujus sedem episcopatus sancti Martini episcopi nomine et ecclesia insignem (ubi ipse etiam corpore una cum pluribus sanctis requiescit) jam nunc Anglorum gens obtenit. Qui locus ad provinciam Berniciorum pertinens vulgo vocatur ad Candidam Casam eo quod ibi ecclesiam de lapide insolito Britonibus more fecerit." This monastery, Candida Casa, or Witherne, is also said to have been known as *Magnum Monasterium*, and "the house of Martin". It became one of the great religious houses of the district, and was celebrated far and wide as a place of religious and secular instruction. Cairnech

[1] *Celtic Scotland*, ii, 2. [2] *Eccl. Hist.*, iii, 4.

is said to have gone from there to Ireland, and to have become "the first bishop of the Clan Niall and of Tara, the first martyr, the first monk, the first Brehon of Erin."[1] Whatever may be thought of the legend, it is not impossible that Candida Casa was the source of both Welsh and Irish monasteries. If the Picts who followed Cunedda to Wales were Christians, it is probable they were so from the labours of Ninian, and it is most likely that from those Picts who settled in South Wales the missionaries went who really converted Ireland to the faith.

The whole subject of Ninian and his work is one that requires most careful investigation, far more than it has yet received. It would, if worked out, throw a flood of light on the early Christianity of these Islands. Even if it is proved that it was by means of Ninian and Ninian's monastery that Christianity came to Wales and Ireland, it will still leave the fact of the early settlements on tribal territory of the Christians in Wales and Ireland, and their development, untouched, and it will not prove the Latin origin of the Celtic Church, although it will give a reasonable explanation as to it.

It would seem, from the mention by Bede of monastic bishops,[2] or bishops subject to the rule of an abbot, as being one of the features of the Pictish Church, that whatever may have been the origin of Ninian and his mission, the church he founded soon passed from the Latin to the Celtic system.

There is nothing like real evidence to show that the monasticism of the Celtic Church was the same as that of the Latin; in fact, such evidence as there is points in the other direction. It therefore becomes necessary to inquire into what was the Celtic monastic system. Its origin

[1] *Chronicle of the Picts and Scots*, p. 55. [2] *Eccl. Hist.*, iii, 4.

has already been pointed out. Its beginning was the Christian settlement on the land of the tribe. That settlement consisted of the missionaries, their wives and children, and also of any other families that adopted Christianity. The missionary became the priest of the tribe or village, and he and his belongings had to be protected, otherwise the advantages that the tribe hoped to secure by becoming Christians would be lost. The missionaries could not be expected to use their supernatural powers for a tribe who were inhospitable, and did not at least do their best to protect them. The Christians accordingly made their village and fortified it, so as to be secure against the forays of any neighbouring tribe. In some cases they seem to have been received into the actual village of the tribe, which then became a Christian settlement. Montalembert[1] expresses very aptly the change which Christianity produced on these Celtic tribes. "Les premiers grands monastères de l'Irlande ne furent donc autre chose, à vrai dire que des clans réorganisés sous une forme religieuse." The original reason for association was protection against the heathen; the Christians lived together for safety against their enemies. The settlement was not a monastery in our sense of the word, but a Christian village community, something like the groups of Christians in the earliest days of the Church as described in the Acts of the Apostles. The conversion of the country meant the establishment of these communities all over the land. They were self-governing and self-contained, and from this it followed that each of them must have had all that was necessary to carry on the settlement and continue the Church. So it became essential that not only should each community have its priests, but also its bishop. They had to form their

[1] *Moines d'Occident*, iii, 88.

organization on some rule or model, and they took that of the tribe to which they were attached, and on whose lands they were settled. The head of the settlement was the chief of the tribe, the head of the tribe of the Saint—probably he was originally the successful missionary—and the heads of the different households formed the other members of the tribe. All were related: by being admitted to the tribe they were sons of God, and, as such, relations. Baptism was the ceremony of admission, and tonsure one of the outward and visible signs of being admitted. At first there was probably no fixed rule of life—they did what the head of the tribe prescribed, and this became the custom of the community.

These early Christian settlements must have had some resemblance to a state of things that is said still to exist in some of the villages of central and southern India. To the village a class of persons are hereditarily attached in such a way as to show that they form no part of the natural and organic aggregate to which the bulk of the villagers belong. Though not included in the village they are an appendage, solidly connected with it; they have definite village duties, one of which is the settlement of boundaries, on which their authority is allowed to be conclusive.[1] If for settlement of boundaries religious ceremonies is substituted, this will accurately describe the position of the early Christian settlement.

The development of these early settlements into monasteries seems to be the subject of a remarkable document first printed by Ussher,[2] and said to be not later in date than the middle of the eighth century. A copy is in a MS. volume of Lives of Irish Saints called the *Codex*

[1] Maine's *Village Communities*, p. 127.

[2] Works, vol. vi, p. 477; *Antiq. Eccl. Britt.*, 913; *Haddan and Stubbs*, ii, 292.

Salmanticensis, in the Burgundian Library at Brussels. It is called *Catalogus Sanctorum Hiberniæ secundum diversa tempora*.[1] It divides the history of the Irish Church into three periods; the first, a space of about 100 years, from the reign of Loeghair, son of Niall, 435–471, to the reign of Tuathal Maolgarbh, 533–544, represents the time of the early settlements when the Christians dwelt together in one community, the reason being they were all of one tribe and so of one faith. "The first order of Catholic Saints," it says, "was in the time of Patrick, then they were all bishops, famous and holy, full of the Holy Ghost; three hundred and fifty in number, founders of churches. They had one head, Christ, one leader, Patrick; they observed one mass, one celebration, one tonsure, from ear to ear. They celebrated one Easter, on the fourteenth moon after the vernal equinox. What was excommunicated by one church, all excommunicated, they excluded from the church neither laymen nor women, because founded on the rock of Christ they feared not the blast of temptation. They continued for four reigns. All the bishops are sprung from Romans and Franks, Britons and Scots."

This appears to be a picture of the early Christian settlements. The founder of the settlement adopted certain distinctive rites that would serve to identify him and his tribe when required. The only things that they agreed, or professed to agree upon, were, that they were Christians, that they recognised some authority in Patrick, probably as the greatest miracle worker. They had a distinctive form of mass, of celebration, and of tonsure. They had a fixed date for celebrating Easter, which was not the one the Latin Church adopted in 463, at the instance of Pope Hilary, but the old cycle of eighty-four years; thus show-

[1] See Appendix.

ing that the settlement, if in any way derived from Rome, was earlier than 463. They considered a person who had been turned out of the tribe of the Saint, that is, out of any of the settlements, to be incapable of entering any of the other settlements; he was in the position of the tribeless man, an outlaw against whom every man's hand was raised, one whose life had no value, and so any one could kill him. Priests and laymen, men, women, and children, all lived together in the Christian settlement. It will be seen what a very wide field this left open for local divergence or difference. All that these settlements had in common was the profession of the merest rudiments of the faith, just enough, even if it was enough, for them to call themselves by the common name of Christians. The first century of the life of the Celtic Church coloured its whole future, and the time from 435 to 544 was a period of total absence of any general control. During this time, no Pagan, if he thought there was anything to be gained by it, could have objected to call himself a Celtic Christian.

What the circumstances were that led to the next stage of development in the Celtic monasteries may be fairly inferred from some statements in the Lives of the Irish and Welsh Saints. The necessity for separate communities of Christians had passed away after the revival of Christianity in Ireland which followed the apostacy on Patrick's death. Ireland had become substantially Christian, though Pagan rites were still practised and Pagan ideas prevailed, but nominally and outwardly the people, or the majority, professed to be Christians, and therefore the necessity for separate Christian settlements had ceased; consequently the Christian villages passed into another stage—they became places of instruction and schools of learning. This stage began in the reign of Diarmait,

544–565, and lasted till that of Aed Mac Ainmire, 572–598. It nearly corresponds with the life of Columbanus (543–615), with the great missionary efforts of the Irish Church, and the attempt to lay down a rule of life for the Celtic monks. It was perhaps the most glorious time of the Celtic Church, as in it lived its three great Saints—Columba, David, and Columbanus.

This second stage of development is thus described in the *Catalogue* :—"The second order was of Catholic priests, for in this order there were few bishops and many priests, in number, 300. They had one head, our Lord; they celebrated different masses, and had different rules; one Easter, on the fourteenth moon after the equinox; one tonsure, from ear to ear; they refused the services of women, separating them from the monasteries. This order has hitherto lasted for four reigns. They received a mass from Bishop David, Gillas, and Docus, the Britons."

This second stage, therefore, really represents the reformed monastic system after the death of Patrick and the defeat of the apostacy that followed on it, when Christianity was re-established by the work of Welsh monks. It describes the Irish monasteries at their best epoch. It will be noticed that no mention is here made of a rule of life common to all the monasteries. It is expressly stated that in ritual, at least, there was no uniformity, they had different masses and different rules, that is, rules of life in the monasteries. This, therefore, supports the statement previously made, that each monastery had its own set of rules. From this account it would appear that the early Celtic monasteries, the village communities, were not, of necessity, the home of every virtue. Something will be said on this point later; here, the only thing necessary to observe is, the direct

statement that the different monastic institutions had each rules of their own, probably either the rules the founder had ordained for his house to follow, or the local custom that had grown up with the settlement.

The next development consisted in the application of a still more rigorous discipline to these establishments. The country had become wholly Christian; to be a Christian was no longer anything remarkable, and the Celt, whose great object always was to attract attention, had to resort to other means to do so. This led to a development of the ascetic element. The Celtic monk now began to practise austerities as the mark of holiness. The Celt never did anything by halves, and his devotions and austerities, both in the monasteries and the hermitages, would have astonished even the monks of the Eastern Church. If evidence is wanted to support this statement then all that is needed is a visit to the Outer Skelig, where it will at once be seen to what extent Celtic monks could go along the paths of sanctity and suffering.

The third development is thus described:—"The third order was of this sort: there were holy priests and a few bishops, one hundred in number, who dwelt in desert places, lived on herbs and water, and alms; they despised private property (or in another MS., they despised all earthly possessions, and avoided all whispering and slanders), they had different rules and masses, different tonsures, some had the crown and some the hair, different Paschal festivals, some celebrated the resurrection on the fourteenth moon, others on the sixteenth, *cum duris intentionibus*. These lived during four reigns."

These three accounts have all the appearance of genuineness, and, if so, they furnish ample materials to show how the monastic idea developed among the Celts, (1) a residence for mutual protection, (2) then a school of

learning, and (3) the starting-place of a number of anchorites or hermits. The settlement, the school, the solitary, mark the process of the development of early Celtic monasticism. In Ireland each of the three stages are seen at work. In Wales our view is limited mostly to the second and third. As has been already pointed out, Latin monasticism developed by the solitary, the school, the religious house; while the Celtic process was just the reverse, being the settlement, the school, the solitary. No one who even glanced at this state of things but might be safely left to say that the life of the Celtic monk in the monastery in any of the stages of development disclosed a mode of living essentially different from the system of the Latin Church. It is a curious fact that the compiler of this Celtic list regarded the first of the stages of development as that of the highest form of sanctity, and entitled to the greatest reverence; and it is a fact that goes far to prove the antiquity and genuineness of the document, as no Latin monk, no Latin scribe, would ever have said that a state of things that permitted the sexes to live together in familiar intercourse was a time of the highest holiness. The writer of the *Catalogue* says the first class was most holy, *sanctissimus*; the second class, *sanctior*; and the third, *sanctus*. A Latin writer would have reversed this classification, and would not have described the first order as "shining as the sun", the second, "shining as the moon", the third, "shining as the stars". But the order is eminently characteristic of the Celtic Church, as it did not attach great importance to chastity, or, rather, gloried in unchastity. The objection to women and men living together in the same community would not be apparent. This is shown by the legends the Celtic Church has recorded of her Saints, as for instance, that of Patrick's sister, Lupait,

who lived with her nephew Mel, and when the Saint arose at night to pray, Lupait got into his bed. Among his Latin biographers this caused scandal, and so to avoid it Patrick is said to have caused the men to be separated from the women, and provided separate dwellings for the sexes.[1] But this is nothing to the story of a Welsh Saint, Scuthin, who was brought up by David at Menevia, and if the legend is true, it throws a curious light on that part of David's history which relates to his conduct to the maidens of Boia. Scuthin, who was too holy to think of scandal, was in the habit of sharing his bed with two virgins of surpassing loveliness. This was too much even for the general run of Celtic morality, and Brendan hearing of it, went to Scuthin to remonstrate with him. Scuthin, to show that to "the pure all things were pure", offered that Brendan should sleep that night in his bed, while he spent the time in prayer. Brendan agreed, and went to bed. As was the custom, the two virgins came and got into the bed. They soon began to revile Brendan for not sleeping quietly. This satisfied him. He admitted the perfect propriety of Scuthin's sleeping arrangements, and declared that the height of purity to which, by this peculiar method, he had attained was worthy of the greatest praise.[2] Such a legend is certainly a genuine Celtic story. No Latin writer who desired to depict the highest standard of purity, and the best means of attaining it, would dare to hold up Scuthin and his method as a pattern for the Church to follow. To a Celt, especially to a Welsh Celt, whose ideas on marriage and the relation of the sexes were of the lowest, such a story would not arouse feelings of astonishment or shame. Something of

[1] Jocelyn's *Life of Patrick*, 145, 146.

[2] See Scholia to the Dublin copy of the *Martyrology of Œngus*, cited by Todd, *St. Patrick*, 91, n.

the kind seems to have been considered as Scuthin's great glory; for in Cuimmin's poem on the Saints of Ireland Scuthin is thus spoken of: "Scuthin of the sweet stories loved—a blessing on every one who hath done it—damsels beautiful, white-bosomed, and among them he kept his virginity."[1]

One importance of these legends is their bearing on the stories that are related of the Celtic monks, and especially the Irish Celtic monks of the third order. The Latin conscience was probably so shocked when such stories appeared in the *Lives of the Saints*, that those who transcribed these lives amended them by giving to the Celtic monk virtues that the Latin considered he ought to have possessed, whatever was the actual fact. Hence, probably, arose the stories of the austere behaviour of the Irish hermits to women, such as that of Senan, who would not allow a woman to land on his island of Enden, who, when his sister came to visit him, refused to see her, making her stay in a tent, and converse with him through the tent with her face covered by a veil. Morality, in the modern sense of the term, was never a characteristic of the Celts, especially of the Welsh Celts. According to our ideas, not only were most of the Welsh saints illegitimate, but they seemed to glory in it. The pious attempts of the Latin monks to bolster up the character of their Celtic brethren only serve to mark the point where the Celtic legend ceases and the Latin version begins. It must not be supposed that the Celtic monasteries were hot-beds of vice, but on the other hand they were not places of strict asceticism. Whatever else they were, neither the Celtic monks nor the Celtic clergy in Ireland or Wales ever professed to be a body of celibates, and this fact goes far to prove that the monasticism of Wales was not due to Germanus or any Latin source.

[1] *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, i, 65.

There have come down to us several sets of documents which have an important bearing on this part of the question, as showing what was the monastic life of the Celts, and the habits to which their monks were supposed to conform. It may be taken for granted that the first form of Celtic monastery produced a good deal of what we should call immorality. When it is borne in mind that marriage was not the mode by which rights were necessarily transmitted from father to son—that it was the fact of paternity, rather than paternity following wedlock, that was alone regarded—it will at once be seen that a state of things may have existed that in our opinion would be a scandal. Doubtless the heads of the Celtic Church were wise in their generation, when the monasteries passed from being tribal dwellings to schools of learning, in taking advantage of the change to reject the ministrations of women.

The so-called canons, said to have been made at a synod of bishops of the Celtic Church, consisting of Patrick, Auxilius, and Isseriunus, are ascribed by Haddan and Stubbs to a date between 716 and 777.[1] They bring out one or two points connected with Celtic monasteries. (*a*) The separation of the sexes (No. 9), "Monachus et virgo unus ab hinc et alia ab aliunde in uno hospitio non commaneant nec in uno curru a villa in villam discurreant nec absidue invicem confabulationem exerceant." (*b*) The marriage of nuns (No. 17), "Virgo quæ voverit Deo permanet kasta et postea nubserit carnalem sponsum excommonis sit donec convertatur, si conversa fuerit et dimiserit adulterium pœnitentiam agat et postea non in una domo nec in una villa habitent"; and (*c*) they show that a check was attempted to be put on wandering inmates (No. 34), "Diaconus nobiscum similiter qui inconsultu

[1] ii, 331.

suo abbate sine litteris in aliam parruchiam absentat nec cibum ministrare debet et a suo presbitero quem contempsit per pœnitentium vindicetur. Et Monachus inconsultu abbate vagulus debet vindicari."

These canons show that the Irish Celtic Church had become settled, that monasticism had become a recognised institution, and certain rules were applied to monks as a class, that the early state of things of the sexes living together had not only passed away but was regarded as a clerical offence, and that the heads of the monasteries exercised a legal and recognized control over the inmates of the monastery. They also point to the introduction of the Latin tonsure ("more Romani capilli ejus tonsi sint," c. 6), to the continuance of heathen customs ("more gentilium ad aruspicem juraverit," c. 14), and to the early customs of the Irish Church, which (c. 25) are referred to as "mos antiquus." A further batch of canons of a second synod, ascribed to Patrick, which Haddan and Stubbs[1] say are Irish, but of a later date, contain a provision (xvii) as to hermits: "Monachii sunt qui solitarii sine terrenis opibus habitant sub potestate episcopi vel abbatis non sunt autem monachi sed vactroperiti hoc est contemptores solliciti (*q.* sæculi). Ad vitam perfectam in ætate perfecta (hoc est a viginti annis) debit unusquisque constringi non adtestando sed voto perficiendo."

This canon, while admitting that hermits living under the authority of some abbot or bishop were monks, quotes St. Jerome's expression, "*Bactro-peratæ*," unauthorized monks, whom he styles "*contemptores sæculi*". These must have been unorthodox hermits, who were not recognized as belonging to any regular monastery. Another canon, the xviii, founded on the Parable of the Sower, states the fruit the Church expects her children to bring forth;

[1] ii, 333.

bishops and doctors were to bring forth an hundred fold, clergy and chaste widows sixty, laymen thirty, monks and virgins an hundred fold. These canons, although interesting as showing what the state of things was in the Celtic Church, do not give much direct information as to the monasteries, except that for the monks a higher standard was required than for the laymen; it cannot be said that they laid down any fixed rules for universal application.

The earliest glimpses we get of the discipline of the Welsh monasteries is from the *Penitential* of Gildas, which is ascribed to a date before 570.[1] This document, by the penalties it prescribes for un-natural offences, at once brings up the question as to the moral state of the Welsh monasteries. With regard to this, it may safely be said that the fact of finding a penalty provided for an offence should not be taken as evidence that the offence was of common occurrence. No one would be justified in saying, from the elaborate provisions in our Statute Book as to certain classes of offences, that such offences were of constant occurrence. It was the habit to make laws to deter persons from committing offences, and it may well be that something of the kind was the reason for the provisions as to offences against morality among the early Celtic monks. The same observations apply to other offences, such as theft, gluttony, drunkenness; it was the exception, not the rule, that caused the provisions to be made. The Welsh canons all point to the fact that a higher degree of piety is required from a monk than a layman, and so that a higher penalty is provided in case of an offence by a monk; but the Welsh canons do not give any trace of there being special rules applying to monks that did not apply equally to the clergy and laity, the only difference being in the

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 113.

penalty. The so-called rule of Columba is more in the nature of good advice to a Christian, than a definite rule of life to be followed in a monastery. There is really no evidence that Columba ever composed a written rule for his monks, nor, if he did, that it has come down to us, and so far as to any general monastic rules for the Celtic monasteries in these islands it may be said that none are known to us; and that there does not seem to have been any regular rule, but that each monastery prescribed its own regulations for its monks. This would be what might be expected from the peculiar position of the Celtic monasteries not having, at least during the first period of their existence, any authority supreme over all, and which was recognized by all of them.

The Celtic monks on the continent fell under a different system; there, the close contact with the Latin Church and the Latin monks who lived under a fixed rule, that of St. Benedict, drove the Celts almost in spite of themselves to adopt a rule of life for their monasteries; that rule, the rule of Columbanus, is a distinct and definite rule of conduct for monastic bodies. It does not, however, appear ever to have been adopted in Ireland or Wales, and may therefore be passed by, merely remarking that it was stricter than the rule of St. Benedict, and would, if carried out in its entirety, have made the Celtic monks almost, if not quite, the most austere of men, and have obviated the necessity for the various reforms that were adopted to bring the rule of St. Benedict to a proper pitch of austerity. The three great points Columbanus taught his monks were, absolute and passive obedience to the abbot without any exception; perpetual silence except for most necessary causes; a reduction of food to the lowest possible limit. It is assumed by Montalembert that this rule was the outcome of the discipline in the

Irish monasteries.[1] As has been already stated, it was unknown in Ireland, and never came in force either there or in Wales. There is one point on it that has led to a good deal of controversy, from not sufficiently regarding the nature of the Celtic monasteries. One of the rules of Columbanus was: "Si quis monachus dormierit in uno domo cum muliere tres dies in pane et aqua. Si nescivit quod non debet uno die." In his history of France Michelet[2] translated this, "For the monk who has transgressed with a woman, three days of bread and water." This rather free translation was violently attacked by Catholic writers, and Montalembert and others translated the passage, "He who on a journey should have slept under the same roof with a woman had to fast three days on bread and water." "Celui qui étant en voyage aurait couché sous le même toit qu'une femme devait jeûner trois jours au pain et a l'eau."[3] But this last translation is open to quite as much objection as Michelet's; the meaning of the rule being that when the sexes were separated, and the monasteries kept for the monks alone, the monk who was found sleeping out, either in a house in which there was a woman, or in the part of the religious establishment set apart for women, was liable to the penalty. It had nothing to do with a monk on a journey, but referred to the peculiar arrangement of the Celtic monasteries, first, to the time when women were turned out of the monasteries, and next, to the case of double monasteries, like the celebrated one at Kildare, where there were both monks and nuns. If a monk was found sleeping in the nun's quarters, he was naturally made liable to a penalty. This would seem to be all that

[1] *Moines d'Occident*, ii, 548.

[2] *Histoire de France*, i, 286. "Pour le moine qui a failli avec une femme deux jours au pain et a l'eau."

[3] *Moines d'Occident*, ii, 549.

was meant by this much disputed provision of the rule of Columbanus.

The double monasteries just referred to, form a curious feature in Celtic monasticism, and although adopted at a later date on the continent, they seem in their origin to have been purely Celtic. Kildare is the earliest, and here Bridget struck out a line of her own. It was probably at the time when the transition between the settlement and the school was coming over the Celtic monasteries that the idea was formed to separate the sexes while retaining both in the monastery. Bridget's has been the most celebrated example of the experiment. The oratories in the Church were separated by planks, and through one door the bishop, monks, and clergy, entered, and through the door on the other side, the abbess, with the virgins and widows. This plan carried out the separation of the sexes, while retaining the advantages of all living together. It was probably a failure, but it is of interest as marking a point in the transition between the first and second orders of monasteries. Unfortunately we know but little of the inner life of the Kildare house, but it is a curious feature in the development of Celtic monasteries.

Before proceeding to consider the position of the different Celtic monasteries, a word should be said as to the buildings connected with the monasteries of the monks of the third order, the solitaries. They have been cited as one of the proofs that show the Eastern origin of the Celtic Church, and this theory has been most ingeniously set forth by Professor George Stokes, in his *Ireland and the Celtic Church*. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that in the third order of monks the anchorites had an important influence on Church history. It would be a mistake to consider them hermits, in our sense of

the word, as persons dwelling alone, far from "cities and the busy hum of men"; there were doubtless many such, but these were probably the *Bactro-peratæ*, the unorthodox anchorites mentioned in the canons. The real anchorite was the one who did not leave the territory of the tribe of the Saint, but built himself a cell or enclosure on it, in which he dwelt, and out of which he rarely came. To the territory of the tribe of the Saint there was a district or tract of land attached for the purpose of these anchorites building their cells; and this was the case not merely in Ireland, but in Scotland at Iona, in England at Holy Island, and on the continent at Bobbio. So far, no hermits' cells have been identified in any Welsh monastery, but it is most likely because they have not been carefully looked for. The change brought about was that the monks ceased to live in buildings in common; each lived apart, although in the monastery, in a cell of his own construction.

With reference to the form of buildings that composed the monastery, the first form was either the village into which the missionaries were received as families of the tribe, when they built whatever house or buildings they wanted, for purposes of shelter and for purposes of worship, or it was a regular village built upon the tribe land on the spot where the tribal chief permitted the missionaries to settle. If the latter, it was at once fortified with a wall and ditch, having the necessary buildings inside the fort. This would be the common form in Wales, if we are to judge by the prevalence of the term "Llan", which would be the proper term to describe such a settlement. When the second order of things arose, and the monastery passed from a settlement to a school, this was done either by turning out the old dwellers inside the fort, or else in making an inner en-

closure. In Ricemarch's *Life of David* it is said that he endeavoured to enlarge the companies of souls, so he left Paulinus at Whitland (?), and confined some of the disciples within the bounds of a monastic cloister; "inter cenobialis claustri septa coartans."[1] He reached Kidwelly, where two Saints, Boducat and Martuin, appear to have been living in the older form of monastery, the Christian settlement. The Welsh *Life* says they agreed to become disciples of David, *a ymrodassant yn disgyblon y Dewi.*[2] Ricemarch says, "Dederunt sibi manus",[3] and that the monastery having been founded according to custom, vessels of canonical order were placed there, and a rule for canonical life ordained, "his itaque ex more fundatis dispositisque canonici ordinis utensilibus ac ordinata cœnobialis habitus regula."

This seems to show that David reformed the old monasteries, and turned them from Christian settlements into schools, or places for worship. assemblies of men living together under some kind of fixed rule. The account of David founding his own monastery of Menevia bears this out; he went there with three of his most faithful pupils, Aidan, Eilud, and Ishmael, and a number of disciples. They began to build their houses, acting in accordance with the rule of life under which their monasteries were governed; they refused to allow any females inside the monastery, and the story of Boia's maidens is probably only a form of the strict enforcement of the rule of the monks of the second order. These monasteries were mainly schools of learning, and this very one, Menevia, soon became the most attractive place of education for the Irish. From Menevia went out that body of monks who established the second form of monasticism in Ireland. It will be remembered that

[1] *Camb.-Brit. Saints*, 123. [2] *Ibid.*, 105. [3] *Ibid.*, 123.

Menevia was founded in or near the territory of a chief, Boia, who was a Pict, one of the Gwyddel Fichti. It may be only an accidental coincidence that one of that race, one who did so much to introduce the monasteries of the second order into Ireland, was an early pupil at this monastery, Finnian of Clonnard. His story is curious. He was an Irish Pict, one of the Cruitheni. In his youth, he was a pupil of Foirtchernn of Trim. In the account of the foundation of the monastery of Trim, it is expressly mentioned that the wife of the chief, the mother of Foirtchernn Scothnoe, was a Welsh woman,[1] and it was probably the connection between her and Wales, possibly also the settlement of his own people near Menevia, that led Finnian to become a pupil there. He found, or is said to have found there, the three saints who gave Ireland a form of mass, David, Cadoc, and Gildas. If the *Life of Gildas* is to be relied on, it would be more likely that Finnian found Gildas at Llancarvan, over which he is said to have presided for about a year.[2] After spending thirty years of his life in Welsh monasteries, Finnian determined to go to Rome, but an angel appeared to him, and pointed out for him the real path of duty lay in Ireland, where his work was to restore the faith which had lapsed after Patrick's death. Finnian went to Ireland, and took with him the reformed Welsh monasticism, the substitution of schools or places of devotion for settlements, and a number of Welsh disciples. The result soon appeared. He founded the monastery of Clonnard, in Meath, from which the new Irish monasteries proceeded. Finnian of Clonnard is mentioned in the *Catalogue of Saints* with another Finnian, or Finnbar, of Moiville, as the two Finnians who were at the head of the Saints of the second order. If any reliance can be placed on a hymn printed in the office of

[1] *Tripartite Life*, Rolls ed., ii, 334. [2] *Vita Sancti Gildæ*, viii.

St. Finnian, he well deserved the place, as he turned out not less than three thousand disciples:—

"Trium virorum milium
Sorte fit doctor humilis
Verbi his fudit fluvium
Ut fons emanans rivulis."

In the *Donegal Martyrology* he is spoken of as the foster father (*oidhe*) of the Irish Saints; and the twelve apostles of Ireland, the men who filled the land with monasteries, of the new form of monasticism that was to make Irish monks a name to be reverenced, were all pupils of Finnian, and so all connected with Wales. These twelve apostles were, Ciaran of Saighir, and Cairan of Clonmacnois, son of the artificer, Columcille of Hy, better known as Columba of Iona, Brendan of Birr, and Brendan of Clonfert, or Brendan the voyager, Columba son of Crimthan, who founded Tirrdaglas, Molaisse, abbot of Devenish, an island monastery in Lough Erne, Cainnech of Agahbo, Ruadan of Lorrha, Mobhi the flat-faced of Glasnevin, Senell of Cluaininnis, and Nannidh of Inis mac Saint, both islands in Lough Erne. Like Finnian himself, two of these, Brendan of Birr and Cainnech of Agahbo were Picts.[1] It will be observed that all these monks were connected with monasticism in the centre and south of Ireland, the parts in which the Welsh influence was always the strongest. With the exception of the best known of these monks, Columba of Iona, all the others had one peculiarity, they confined their work to Ireland. Dr. Todd[2] points out that these Clonnard monks formed a sort of society or fellowship, and claimed for themselves a kind of supremacy over other ecclesiastics, particularly in matters relating to the

[1] Todd's *St. Patrick*, p. 99; Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii, p. 52.
[2] *St. Patrick*, p. 148.

defence of the rights of the monasteries, and especially the right of sanctuary. It was for the violation of the the right of sanctuary that the war with King Diarmaid broke out, which turned Columba from being the quarrelsome abbot of some obscure Irish house into the great missionary saint of the Celtic Church. The importance of the idea of the Clonnard house, that the abbots of the chief houses had special rights, led to two very important results in connection with the monasteries—the enforcement of the rights of the tribe of the Saint, rights which had been either not so much insisted upon previously, or which, on the relapse into Paganism had become the rights of the Druids or heathen priests; and secondly, the strict enforcement of the rules as to the succession to the abbacy of the different monasteries, which involved the headship of the tribe of the Saint. How far the fact that the action that led to this came from Clonnard, and that Clonnard was greatly under Welsh influence, justifies an inference that this development of monastic rights came from Wales to Ireland, is a question of considerable difficulty; but it is reasonably clear that with local variations that did not affect the principle that underlaid them, these rights existed in both countries, and in one form or another they are met with in every page of the history of the Celtic Church, and form one of its most striking characteristics.

Before considering the question as to the tribe of the Saint, something must be said as to the monasteries in the North of Ireland. South Wales, as has been shown, led the movement which brought back the south and centre of Ireland from Paganism to Christianity, a movement which had its origin in David's monastery of Menevia, and through Clonnard re-converted Ireland. But the movement did not reach the north of Ireland;

they had their own saints, and acted independently. The most celebrated was Gildas; by his efforts another great centre of Irish Christianity, Bangor, the great northern rival of Clonnard, arose. Among the Irish students who frequented the NorthWales monastery of Bangor was Finnian, or Finnbar, who, having completed his studies there, returned to Ireland, bringing with him what was probably the Welsh order of mass. The passage relating to him in the metrical calendar of Œngus the Culdee, is said to mean that Finnbar brought over the gospel to Ireland. This statement has given rise to great controversy among the writers on early Irish Church history. It is not improbable that the gloss in the Brussels copy may give the right interpretation, which alleges that Finnbar brought over the gospels as revised by St. Jerome, that is, the Vulgate. All legends agree that Finnbar brought with him some wonderful MS. It was by copying this MS. the quarrel arose which was the direct cause of Columba going into exile. Dr. Todd,[1] referring to the fact that the saints of the second order brought with them a mass from Wales, suggests with great plausibility that such book was a missal. It may be pointed out that as it is clear from the quotations of Scripture in the writings of Gildas that the version of Scripture he used, and which was probably the same as that used in the North Wales Church, was a version of the Bible of the pre-Vulgate series, but not corresponding with any that have come down to us; it was probably this version that Finnbar studied in a North Wales monastery, and took over with him to Ireland. It is also noteworthy that, in his *Life*, Gildas is said to have written a remarkable copy of the Evangelists in gold and silver, which was considered by the Welsh to be a most precious book,[2] and it may well be that it was one of the

[1] *St. Patrick*, 107 n. [2] *Vita Sancti Gildæ*, sec. viii.

elaborately illuminated Welsh gospels that Finnbar took with him to Ireland. The matter is of importance, as it was not only the gospels that Finnbar was said to have taken with him, but also a code of canons which are alleged to have come from Rome. Finnbar having gone there saw Pope Pelagius, who gave him certain relics and also a body of rules or canons for the government of the Church. So far as Pope Pelagius is concerned, the dates show that the story is an invention of a later age. No western saint would have accepted canons from a suspected murderer like Pope Pelagius I, and Pelagius II is of too late a date (578–590) to fit in with Finnbar. If Finnbar did bring any canons over to Ireland, the probability is that he brought those which were in force amongst the North Wales Christians. So that in trying to discover the rule of the Welsh Church, the so-called *Canones Wallicæ* should not be slighted because they are said to have an Irish origin, neither should the Irish canons be neglected. Probably the real rule will be found by a careful comparison between the two sets of canons.

The efforts of the North Wales Church to secure the restoration of Christianity in the north of Ireland did not rest with sending Finnbar to Ulster. It is said that the Irish king, "Ainmire", sent to Gildas begging him to visit Ireland, promising to obey him and all his doctrines if he would come and restore ecclesiastical order in the country, because almost all the inhabitants of that island had abandoned the Catholic faith. Gildas, it is said, agreed to the request, went over to Ireland, was presented to the king, who begged him to remain and restore religion. Gildas made a tour through Ireland, restored churches, and taught the clergy to worship

the Holy Trinity in the Catholic faith. This mission of Gildas is mentioned in the *Annales Cambriæ*, under the year 578, "Migratio Gildæ in Hibernia", and the death of Gildas is mentioned in the annals of Ulster, the annals of Innisfallen, and by Tigernach, thus giving great colour to the truth of the legend that the three great Welsh Saints revived Christianity in Ireland, and that the revival was by means of monasticism. Against this should be set the view of Dr. Todd,[1] that the name Gildas is not the name of a person but only another form of the Irish term "Giolla De", servant of God, a title, or sort of ecclesiastical degree given by the schools of Ireland. That, therefore, there were several persons who had a right to the title, and were distinguished from each other by being called "Sapiens", "Badonicus", "Albanicus", "Gildas"; the Welsh Saint is usually supposed to be "Gildas Badonicus", although on this there is great difference of opinion. Ingenious as this theory is, yet it hardly accounts for the existence of a distinct person bearing the name both in the Welsh and the Irish annals. It may well be that the legendary Gildas is not historical in all the details ascribed to him, but it seems reasonably clear that there was such a Welsh Saint who did take an actual part in the restoration of Christianity in Ireland, especially in Ulster, and it is most probable that such monasticism as he introduced was of the Welsh type. The chief of the new houses, the celebrated Bangor, was named after the great Welsh house; it became the rival, and the successful rival, of Clonmard, and was to Ulster what the other was to the centre and south of Ireland.

The second order of saints helped to evangelize Ireland from Wales; the third order seems to have led a movement of evangelizing Wales from Ireland.

[1] *St. Patrick*, p. 111 n.

The development of the third order of saints appears to have produced different results in Ireland and Wales. In the latter it took the form of solitary saints, in Ireland of missionary efforts. It is a curious instance of this, that in treating of the third holy family of Wales, that of Brychan, the *Triad* states, that he "educated his children and grandchildren to qualify them to show forth the faith of the Church to the natives of the Cymry that were without the faith." It is added that their spiritual instructor was an Irishman, Brynach Gwyddel, who married one of Brychan's daughters, by whom he had four children. It therefore seems, that while the second order of saints represented an effort from Wales to Ireland, the third order represented a movement from Ireland to Wales. Rees, who is jealous for the honour of his country, tries to make out that the Irish mission was not to the Welsh, but to the Irish settled in Wales.[1] Be this as it may, it seems the Irish missionaries became established in Wales. One of the accounts of the progeny of Brychan mentions twenty-four names, all of whom became holy martyrs and confessors in Devon and Cornwall, where they led an eremitical life. Many instances, both of Irish and Welsh solitaries might be given. In Ireland, Kevin, and Senan celebrated by Moore. In Wales, Gildas and Cadoc, who left the monastery of Llancarvan to live as solitaries on two islands in the Bristol Channel, now known as the Steep and Flat Holmes.

What is known of Celtic monasticism in its early state may thus be summed up. There were three distinct developments of monasteries, which extended from the introduction of Christianity until about the middle of the seventh century. The first was defensive; all Christians lived together for mutual protection; the village either

[1] *Welsh Saints*, pp. 157, 158.

became a Christian settlement, or all the Christian converts lived together and formed a Christian settlement—a fortified village—of their own. Then came the relapse into Paganism, followed by the second conversion of Ireland, when Welsh monks came over and established schools of learning and devotion. South Wales provided for the centre and south of Ireland by the school, or monastery, of Clonnard; North Wales providing for the north and Ulster by the school of the Irish Bangor. When these schools filled to overflowing, a third development arose. Monks went forth from the monasteries as hermits or missionaries, or both, and Ireland began to pay back her loan to Wales, by sending over missionaries to complete the conversion of that country. The schools continued, and great efforts were made at teaching and converting by the missionaries from those schools. The last two developments seem almost to have worked concurrently. Probably their greatest sphere of action was in the north, among the missionaries that came from Iona and other monasteries on the west coast of Scotland, and who tried to convert Scotland and the north of England. Their best example is Cuthbert, the great northern saint, who now rests in Durham Cathedral. The effort of this last development of Celtic monasticism was checked by two causes, the destruction of the great Welsh monastery of Bangor, about 632, and the advance of the Latin clergy.

Allusion has already been made to the founders of the second division of monasteries, the twelve apostles of Ireland, and that some of them, especially those who belonged to Clonnard, had gradually begun to form themselves into a sort of spiritual tribe or clan. This idea of a tribe pervaded each monastery, the whole of the members of which, not only in the monastery itself but also in all its subordinate houses, were considered to form one

family or tribe (*muntir*). This expression (*Mvnwther Benchuir* is used to describe the Bangor house in the Bangor *Antiphonary*[1] as synonymous to the *familiæ Benchuir*. To this tribe some rules and regulations were essential, and the rules and regulations then in force in the lay tribe were the basis of those adopted. The monastic family, the ecclesiastical tribe, began to be spoken of as the tribe of the Saint, the members of which tribe were all assumed to be related by descent, either actually, or in theory, from the saint who had received from the Pagan chief permission to settle on the lands of the lay tribe. This settlement gave the saint, not merely the land, but also conferred on him all the rights of the head of the tribe or clan, which rights followed the rule of devolution that obtained as to the chieftainship of the lay tribe in a defined and fixed way, according to certain definite and recognized rules. The persons who were eligible to succeed to the chieftainship were designated "*coarbs*", or "*conarbs*", and on these, whatever might be their social position, the headship of the tribe devolved. All the dwellers on the settlement were counted together under the name of "the tribe of the Saint", a name which had at least two very important meanings. The first meant the actual descendants of the saint, his children and grandchildren, all of whom formed, or were supposed to form, one family actually related by blood. It also meant all the members of the Christian settlement, because they had been, by a sort of spiritual fosterage, made members of the tribe of the Saint. This clan, or tribe, was the fact that gave the system its vitality in Wales; the clannish theory forms one of, if not the most characteristic feature of the Celtic Church, and in order to properly realize it and appreciate it, the best way will

[1] Fol. 30 r; Henry Bradshaw Society's Pub., vol. iv.

be to consider the account of the foundation of a church on Celtic lines; probably the narrative of the foundation of that at Trim is the best we have, and most accurately describes the foundation of the various Celtic houses both in Wales, England, and Gaul.

The story is related in the *Book of Armagh*.[1] Patrick, on arriving in Ireland, left Lomman at the mouth of the Boyne for forty days, to guard the ships. Lomman remained that time, and also another forty days, and as Patrick did not return, sailed up the river to Trim and anchored near the door of the house of Feidilmidh, son of Loigaire. In the morning Foirtchernn, son of Feidilmidh, on coming out of the house, found Lomman reciting the gospel; after he had listened some time, he believed and was baptized. His mother was a Welsh woman, and hearing the monk speak Welsh, she also believed and was baptized. After some more conversation with the strangers, Feidilmidh himself also believed and was baptized, and he thereupon dedicated (*immolavit*) to God and the holy Patrick his territory and his possessions, with all his substance and all his clan—all these he devoted to Patrick, Lomman, and his son Foirtchernn, until the day of judgment. In this case the Pagan chief did not merely give leave to settle, but placed all his property and belongings in the custody of Patrick. Until Patrick's return Lomman remained at Trim, and a church was built there. The *Book of Armagh* then relates how the Trim settlement was continued. The chief had given over to the saint all his territory, possessions, and substance, and tribe (*progenies*), that is, all the tribe became Christians, and were therefore absorbed into the tribe of the Saint. The saint was from

[1] Fol. 16, a 2, printed in Todd's *St. Patrick*, 257; and in Rolls ed. of *Tripartite Life*, ii, 334.

thenceforth the head of the tribe; his family became the *coarbs*, the family in which the chieftainship resided. So, to place the matter on record and enable the chieftainship to be ascertained at once and without question, the pedigree of the Welshman, Lomman, is inserted in the *Book of Armagh*. He is said to have been the son of Gollit, by Patrick's sister. Gollit was one of Patrick's brethren, whose names are all inserted; they were all ecclesiastics, and the places in which each of these brothers worked, the tribes among which they all laboured, are given at length, so that if any vacancy occurred in the headship of the tribe of the Saint, the Trim tribe would at once, without the least difficulty, know where to go for their new chief. Having given the names of those who might, in certain events, have to succeed, the story proceeds to state what actually took place. Assuming they are named in the order of birth, Lomman feeling he was dying, went to his second brother, Broccaid (passing over the elder, Bishop Manis). He took his disciple, Foirtchernn, with him, "and then," says the account, "he, Lomman, committed his holy church to holy Patrick and to Foirtchernn; but Foirtchernn refused to hold the heritage of his father which he had offered to God and to Patrick. Foirtchernn—it will be remembered—was the son of the converted chief, Feidilmidh, and as such, assuming hereditary right prevailed, would have been the chief of the lay tribe. Lomman declined to give him his blessing unless he agreed to take the chieftainship of the ecclesiastical tribe. On this, Foirtchernn agreed to take it, but he only retained it for three days until he returned to Trim, when he resigned it to a pilgrim, Cathlaid. Sir Henry Maine says,[1] that the blessing of Isaac, as mentioned in Genesis, was the mode of naming an

[1] *Ancient Laws*, p. 243.

eldest son of the person who was to succeed; it was the right of succession and representation, and the same meaning probably applies here. Lomman, the chief of the tribe of the Saint, would claim, as to this day some of the Indian Mahometan sovereigns claim, the right to nominate the son who is to succeed them. His blessing Foirtchernn would be the ceremony whereby he nominated him to succeed as his successor and representative, not only to the chieftainship of the lay tribe, but also to the headship of the Trim monastery, the chieftainship of the tribe of the Saint; and it seems that Foirtchernn only took the headship of the tribe of the Saint so as to secure the nomination to the headship of the tribe of the land.

According to the rules laid down in the *Corus Bescna*,[1] the succession to the tribe of the Saint was regulated as follows: "Any person who was fit in the tribe of the patron saint, even if such person was only a psalm singer." If no such person, then it went to the tribe on whose land the monastery was founded, and if none of such persons were fit for the place, then to the occupants of the monastery; if none of these were fit, it might be given to a pilgrim, that is, to a duly qualified stranger. As Lomman was a foreign saint, that is, as the monastery was given to him by the lay chief, the first choice of head of the monastery, of chief of the spiritual tribe, went to the members of the lay tribe, and of these Lomman selected Foirtchernn as, in his opinion, the fittest for the place. On his refusal, and none of the monks of Trim being considered fit, the next person to be nominated was a stranger, or pilgrim, which was what was done here. So this proceeding, which, at first sight, looks like an act of dictation on the part of Lomman, then

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., iii, 73.

of Foirtchernn, to thrust in his own nominee, was really only an instance of the strict application of the Celtic rules of succession to the chieftainship of the tribe of the Saint. There are several points that are obscure, such as, Why were all the Trim monks passed over as unfit? Could the nominee of the chieftain resign his authority, and, if so, did the nomination go to him or the original head? But the interest of the case is, that it gives an instance of the foundation of a Celtic house, and of the mode in which the rules were applied for determining who was to be the head of that house. From reading any of the Irish records, one thing is clear—it is never safe to assume that the head of an Irish house was an unauthorized intruder, even if he would be so according to Latin rules. Such would clearly be the case here in the succession of the pilgrim Cathlaid, yet his succession, though quite inexplicable, according to Latin ideas, was in strict accordance with the rules of the Celtic house and the Celtic Church.

This incident of Cathlaid suggests another point in connection with the Celtic Church, which is well worth consideration—the effect of the rules on the monasteries of the third order of saints. Monks left their monasteries in large numbers; did these monks become to any extent the heads of other houses? We have no evidence as to this, but if it was so, then one effect of the third order of saints was, to bring about an important disruption in the families of monasteries that were becoming one of the features of the Church in Wales and Ireland, and would do more than anything else to make the monasteries independent of each other. Viewed in this light, the operations of the third order of saints must have been most destructive to some of the peculiar ideas of the Celtic Church, and probably did more to check the

development of the Celtic movement than anything else, and thus prepare for Rome.

To better understand the position of the Celtic monasteries, it will be well to consider briefly the rules as given in the *Corus Bescna*, or customary law, as to the headship of the monasteries, that is, to the headship of the tribe of the Saint. It must be borne in mind, as the case of Trim shows, that the grant of the territory was not to the Church, but to the Saint. It is most important to remember this difference, as it forms one of the distinguishing features between gifts to Celtic and Latin houses. In the former, the gift was almost always personal, to the Saint, in the latter, it was impersonal, to the house. It follows from this that the right of succession in the Celtic case did not belong to the house or any particular member of it, but merely to such of the members of the house as were the representatives of the saint, and failing these it went, not to the house, but to the saint's representatives in the lay tribe. So the first rule which is given in the Irish Law as a gloss on the words "The Church of the tribe of the patron saint" is, "The tribe of the patron saint shall get the church as long as there shall be a person fit to be an abbot of the tribe of the patron saint, even though there should be but a psalm singer of them, it is he that will obtain the abbacy."[1] It seems most likely that the tribe mentioned in this passage does not mean the whole tribe (*muntir*), of which he was head, but only the tribe of which the saint was a member. The second rule was, if there was no one of the tribe of the Saint fit for the place, "the abbacy would go to the tribe to whom the land belonged, until a person fit to be an abbot of the patron saint should be qualified; when he was, the abbacy was to be given to him, if he was better than the abbot

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 73.

from the tribe to whom the land belonged and who had taken it, if he is not better, it is only in his turn he shall succeed".[1] It is difficult to conceive any rule that was more likely to give rise to disputes; the member of the lay tribe who was acting as abbot, was to give up his place when any individual of the Saint's tribe was better qualified than himself. There is nothing said as to what person was to be the judge of the qualification, or how it was to be decided. Bearing this rule in mind, the quarrels we read of as to the headship of some of the Welsh houses, even at a much later date, become quite intelligible, and make it almost impossible to say, as is often said, that any one was guilty of intrusion into the place. As Sir Henry Maine points out,[2] these two rules are a curious instance of the way in "which throughout these artificial structures, the original natural principle on which they are moulded, struggles to assert itself at the expense of the imitative system. In all the more modern guilds, membership always tended to become hereditary, and here we have the Brehon law striving to secure a preference in election to the abbacy to the actual blood relations of the sainted founder. The ecclesiastical rule required election by the monks, the *Corus Bescna* declared that on a vacancy the family of the saint, which here means the founder's sept, ought to be preferred."

The third rule is, that in the absence of a fit person to be abbot from the tribe of the patron saint and from the tribe of the land, "the abbacy is to be given to one of the *fine mynach* class", that is, one of the members of the monastery. The term "tribe of the Saint" is used here in its widest sense, including not merely founder's kin, but all the members of the monastic house. Such person would hold the abbacy until a person fit to be abbot, of the tribe

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 73. [2] *Early Institutions*, 238.

of the patron saint, or of the tribe of the land, should be qualified: when there is such a person, the abbacy is to be given to him in case he is fitter.[1] Here, again, the same difficulty arises—Who is to judge of the fit person? Who is to say when the time has come for him to be instituted, and the abbot chosen from the inmates of the house turned out?

If no fit person could be found in any of the three classes, the founder's family, the lay tribe, the members of the house, then another set of rules applied. Up to this, the basis of the rule had been personal tribal rights, such rights as were the consequence of the tribal system and the rule that every one must belong to some tribe. The next set of rules was an instance of the extension of the tribal system from persons to things. The different churches, that is, the original monastery and its daughter houses, were supposed to be connected together as members of a tribe; they bore peculiar relations to each other, based upon the fact as to the precise position they stood in to each other, and the rules as to the succession to the abbacy were now based on this relationship of the different churches to each other. The first of the churches to appoint was the mother church, the *annoit* church, that is, the church where the saint was educated and brought up. In such a case, either of the great monasteries, such as Clonnard or the Bangor in Ireland, or Menevia or Llandaff in Wales, would appoint the abbot on a vacancy in any of the daughter houses. In strictness, in a case like Clonnard, the appointment should go back further, and Menevia should have appointed to Clonnard and her daughter houses, and Bangor Iscoed to the Irish Bangor and her daughters, but it seems that the rule was not

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 73.

carried out so as to give the mother house in another country the position of an *annoit* house. Failing a person in an *annoit* house, that is, the mother church, recourse was had to the daughter house of the first class, a *dalta* church, that is, a church which had been founded by one of the members of the *annoit* or mother house, a foster daughter to it; thus Clonnard was a *dalta* church to Menevia, if the rule had been strictly applied. The *dalta* churches were the first rank of colonies from the great abbey or mother house. It is not clear in what way, if, as was usually the case, there was more than one *dalta* church, the selection was made among them, and which of them, and for what reason, was entitled to have the first choice; nor does it appear in what way the election was made, whether out of the members of the *dalta* church, or only out of a particular class of them. If the *dalta* church had no fitting person for the abbacy, the next class of churches from which the abbot was to be selected was the *compairche* church, that is, a monastery under the name of the same saint as the mother church. Here, again, the facts are not clear; there is nothing to show how the name was acquired, and what was the relation between this class of church and the *dalta* and *annoit* churches. It could not be because of any dedication in our sense of the term, and there must have been some step, of which we are ignorant, that made all churches bearing the name of the same saint related to each other and to the *annoit* church. Most likely the tie was that some member of the *dalta* church founded the *compairche*, and in this way it was connected to the group of churches of which the *annoit* church, the mother monastery, was the head. Here, also, we are without any clue to the way in which, if there were more than one *compairche* church, one was selected, or who was the person who had to choose the individual and decide on his

fitness to be abbot, or on what ground he was selected out of such groups of churches. If no fit person could be found in the *compairche* churches in the seventh place, the rights of election went to the neighbouring *cill* church, that is, to a small church or monastery not in succession to the others, not related to them. It is difficult to see, and we unfortunately get no information as to what the *cill* church was, or why it had a voice in the matter. It is clear there must be some relationship, and that it was not a mere stranger, as the case of the stranger is provided for later, it is in some way connected with the mother house; possibly it may have been the abode of a saint of the third class—the hermitage of some hermit of the great monastery, which, though not dependent on any of the others, is yet in some sense connected with them. Failing the churches producing a fitting man, resort was then had to an outsider, a pilgrim or a stranger, who, according to the rule, might assume the abbacy on there being a failure of the churches finding a fit man; possibly the pilgrim or stranger was a saint of the third order, one of the wandering monks who had left the monastery, and was leading the life of a hermit, and who, in this way, had some connection with the house, for it is hard to believe that any stranger, with no connection whatever, would be selected. We have not, unfortunately, any account of the mode in which, or the person by whom, the stranger was selected, or in what way the choice was made. We know that there were numbers of wandering monks, *bactro-peratæ*, from the canons made against them, but it is scarcely possible that some special means were not taken to select the abbot out of such a body. If no stranger could be found to take the abbacy, then it would seem that the property of the monastery belonged absolutely to the tribe, that is, the

family of the saint—the founder. "It, the property, must be given to the tribe of the patron saint, for one of them fit to be an abbot goes then for nothing, the abbacy shall be taken from them."[1] An English lawyer would express it that the ultimate remainder was to the right heirs of the patron saint discharged from the trusts for charitable uses.

Although, as has been noticed, there is much about these rules that is very obscure, yet the main points as to the order of succession are plain, and are worthy of very careful study. The succession is divided into three great divisions, personal, or family; tribal from the churches; and strangers. The personal includes, first, the actual descendants of the members of the lay and the saint's tribe; showing that these rules are of a later date than usually supposed, as the artificial extension of the tribe had become recognized, and the succession was not confined to blood relations. The personal division consisting of (1) the founder's family, and in default (2) the lay tribe, or the Saint's tribe. The interposition of the lay tribe between the founder's family and the tribe of the Saint is a very remarkable feature, and one that causes some difficulty as to the exact relations of the two tribes. One great lesson it teaches is, that the tie of blood relationship prevailed over all artificial distinctions, and that, although the Saint's tribe was a distinct body, yet they had no claim to superiority over the lay tribe, but that, even if on an equality, the lay tribe was regarded as the more important of the two. If the tribes failed to supply an abbot, then came the churches, all of whom were bound together by the tribal tie; the choice was still tribal, but continued to groups of another kind, namely, the members of the tribal churches. But still the idea

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 75.

was that the choice was confined within the limits of tribal relationship, each of the churches being related to the other. On the failure of both branches of the tribal stock, the personal and the church, then the monastery could go still further afield; but it is difficult to believe that even here there was not some idea of tribal relationship limiting the choice. It would be so opposed to all Celtic ideas to go outside the tribe in its widest form, and elect to the headship of the tribe of the Saint an alien and an enemy. If the choice was unrestricted there must always have been a fitting person to be found; the abbey and its property could never have been allowed to revert to the right heirs of the saint, the founder, and at no period with which we are acquainted was the tribal idea so extinguished among the Celts as to hand over tribal property to aliens to the prejudice of tribesmen. The last case, however, seems to have happened in the instance of Trim, we know nothing that shows that Cathlaid the pilgrim was in any way connected with the tribe of the land, of the Saint, or with the Church.

This peculiar system of succession to the abbacy of the Celtic monasteries furnishes a key to a good deal of the history of the Celtic Church, as it is clear from it (1) that there did not exist in that Church any authority that was supreme over it, or who had the right of appointing to any vacancy. The Church was quite independent, and the civil power had nothing to do with it. There were no visitors of the monasteries, no outside authority who had power to depose the head of a house. This fact has only to be stated and remembered to show conclusively that the system of the Celt was totally distinct from the system of the Latin. (2) The independence of the groups of monasteries and the division of the country into monastic groups. Each group being united by the tie of tribal or

clannish relationship, is another very important fact; it shows that the country was parcelled out by the monasteries as part of their possessions, and that the tie that bound them together was tribal, and that alone. There was no idea of local or territorial control, hence, no diocese and no episcopal authority, no notion of a common religious order. (3) That the daughter church recognized the authority of the *annoit* church, but that one *annoit* church did not recognize the authority of another; thus Clonnard was independent of Bangor, and both of Armagh, Menevia of Llandaff, and both of Bangor Iscoed. Each group was an independent group, and as there was no general rule observed in the monasteries, so there was no general control over the groups. Each *annoit* church was independent, and could act as it pleased. The form that the Celtic Church took was of a collection of independent groups of monasteries, just as from a civil point of view, the country was broken up into a collection of independent tribes; but while there seem to have been one or more chiefs who exercised some authority over several tribes, there was no ecclesiastical authority to exercise jurisdiction over more than one group of monasteries. This monastic system of the Celtic Church, the series of independent monasteries, with their colonies, living without any regard to a common rule or to external authority, was the system of the Celtic Church, which really formed the ecclesiastical system of the country, both in Wales and Ireland, until after the Norman Conquest it had to give way to the Latin system of diocesan episcopacy.

On succeeding to the abbacy the abbot is said to have come under an obligation to leave to the Church his property. The rule thus stated is of a much later date, and treats the right of succession by will as an established

fact. This was probably not the case until long after the rule came into existence. The rule was, that if the family of the Saint—the tribe of the land and the tribe of the Saint—failed to provide an abbot, and recourse was had to the churches or to an outsider, on the death of the abbot his property belonged to the monastery. "Every one of those who assume the abbacy, except the tribe of the patron Saint, and the tribe to which the land belongs, and the *mynach* class, must leave all his legacy within, to the Church."[1] The person who became abbot became, if he was not already so, a member of the tribe of the Saint, and, as was the rule in the lay tribe, on becoming a member, his property belonged to the tribe; he lost his rights to individual ownership, when he acquired the rights of a tribesman his property formed part of the common fund. But this was not all; distrust of the stranger seems to have been a leading idea in Celtic communities. It has been already stated how long it took a stranger to become a tribesman. So, if a member of another tribe became abbot, he had to give security to keep and leave the property of the monastery intact. The rule also seems to have extended to the case of the appearance of a person fitter than himself, or in a nearer degree to the saint, the founder, that he would resign the abbacy in favour of such person. "On the part of the patron saint, security is given that whenever there shall be a person fit to be an abbot of the tribe to which the land belongs they will restore such abbacy to him."[2] Therefore, unless the abbot was of the tribe, either lay or ecclesiastical, he was looked upon as a mere *locum tenens*, always liable to be displaced on the appearance of a fitter person than himself among the founder's kin, and bound to give security to surrender the abbacy to

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 77. [2] *Ibid.*, iii, 79.

such a person when he appeared. Great importance appears to have been attached to this security. If the person from the tribe of the Saint either could not, or would not give it, he lost his turn, and his right did not revive until the power to appoint had passed through all the different classes of persons entitled in succession to appoint:—"In the case of the tribe of the patron Saint not giving security, the abbacy does not return back until it comes finally to the pilgrim."[1] It was considered better for the abbacy to go to a more remote relation with security than to a nearer one without. "It shall", says the gloss, "sooner pass to the other tribes on their giving security than to the tribe of the patron Saint without security." If, however, the tribe of the patron Saint and the more remote tribe, were both ready to give security, the tribe of the patron Saint was entitled to the abbacy. "It shall sooner pass to the tribe of the patron saint on their giving security, than to the other tribes on their giving security."[2]

These rules, as to security, point to an explanation of what would otherwise be a great difficulty. We find the abbacy going from the head of the family to another member of the family without any apparent reason. The next heir, as we should say, on not being able to give security was postponed to a more distant relation who could do so. If the rule of Irish Tanistry is remembered, that the successor was to be the "eldest and fittest", then this devolution will be readily understood; it was not the eldest person, but the eldest fitting person who became abbot. One of the tests of fitness was the ability to give security. If the person could not do this he was not fit, and was therefore passed over in favour of a person who could do so, and so was fit, and by doing it, proved he was the fittest. There

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 79. [2] *Ibid.*

does not seem to be any clear description how the security was given, nor how the tribe became security to the Church, nor how, if occasion arose, the security could be enforced; probably, from a passage in the *Corus Bescna*,[1] "that the tribe of the patron Saint are to be bound by a guarantee to the tribe to whom the land belongs, upon the *annoit* church," the sanction of the guarantee was like many of the sanctions of that time—supernatural. The wrath of God would be invoked on the tribe that was faithless or forsworn. Such a course would tend to maintain the influence of the mother church, especially if the guarantee was given to her, and she invoked the thunders of heaven on the breach of it. There is also some evidence that if the branches of the tribe stood in an equal degree, and each had its own candidate, the choice was left to providence, that is, it was decided by lot, which was assumed to be a distinct interposition of providence. The *Corus Bescna* says,[2] "The succession shall not devolve upon the branches of the tribe, unless God has given it to one of them in particular." This the gloss explains as meaning, "There are two reasons why the lot is cast, equality of claim, and equality of persons fit for the office." In such a case recourse was had to an appeal to heaven to determine which of the persons was to be chosen. This system of selection by lot seems to have been a common way with the Celts of determining such questions. It was by lot the son that was to be given to the Church was selected; but both here, and in the election of abbot, care was taken that the rights of the Church were not unduly prejudiced. In the choice of the son for the Church, it was part of the rule that the Church could not get the worst son. In the choice of

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 79. [2] *Ibid.*

the abbot it was provided that the man must be the fittest, and the Church would never consider that it was possible for the worst to be fittest.

This system of election seems peculiar to the Celtic Church; it consists of hereditary right qualified by (1) the fact that the persons who were even by hereditary succession entitled, were liable to be set aside, if the Church did not consider them fit, fitness being the great requisite. It is expressly stated in the Irish Laws (1), that "qualification is older than age",[1] and (2), the fit person must be able to give the required security, otherwise he was not considered fit. It was only when it had been ascertained that there were two candidates, each equally fit, that an appeal to the selection of heaven was allowed, and, when it was, doubtless proper precautions were taken that the candidates submitted to the choice of heaven were in all respects eligible. Probably, although in theory and in fact the succession was regulated according to these rules, yet the rules were so manipulated as to give the monastery a very great weight in the selection of its head.

In order to show how much a matter of tribal influence the succession to the abbacy became, reference may be made to a paper of Dr. Reeves,[2] in which he shows that in the three great churches of Trim, Armagh, and Iona, the office of abbot was confined in each case to a single family. In the case of Trim, after the names of the first eight abbots, as given in the *Book of Armagh*, all of them being anterior in date to the commencement of the *Annals of Ulster*, which, as to Trim, is 745, comes a lineal pedigree of the family which descended from the original grantee of the lands, and out of which

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 74 n.

[2] *Proceedings Royal Irish Academy*, vi, 467.

family the ministers of the Church were elected; the former is styled the "*ecclesiastica progenies*", the latter the "*plebilis progenies*" of the founder.[1] The grant of the church of Trim to Patrick, Lomman, and Foirtchernn, until the day of judgment probably was a means of securing in the fifth and sixth centuries a fixity of tenure that would have been otherwise impossible. A grant to the great Irish Saint as virtual protector, with a limitation to the priest locally employed, with remainder to the grantor's son and his heirs, to use modern legal language, was a form of gift more likely to last than any other. We get here the "*plebilis progenies*", in whom the tenancy of the land was vested, possessing a regular succession, and furnishing from its numbers the successors, the *ecclesiastica progenies*, who carried on the abbacy and the traditions of the tribe of the Saint. Gradually the *ecclesiastica progenies* became merged in the *plebilis progenies*, probably because the family were unwilling to allow the right to nominate the abbot to pass away from them. Hence the origin of the lay abbots which form so marked a feature in the Celtic houses. Dr. Reeves contends that the lineal transmission of the office of abbot in various Celtic monasteries, as found in the *Irish Annals* from the close of the eighth century, is due to the *plebilis progenies* usurping the position of the *ecclesiastica progenies*, which he attributes to the hereditary occupants omitting to keep up the purely spiritual succession. This combination of the two functions, spiritual and temporal, produced those *Abbates laici*, of whom Giraldus Cambrensis speaks as existing in his time in Ireland and Wales, and to whom St. Bernard alludes,[2] as among the anomalies that existed in the case of Armagh, "Mos pessimus inoleverat quorundam diabolica

[1] *Tripartite Life*, Rolls ed., ii, 326. [2] *De Vita St. Malachiæ*, cap. x.

ambitione potentum sedem sanctam obtentum in hæreditaria successione nec enim patiebantur episcopati nisi qui essent de tribu et familia sua." This passage shows, perhaps, more clearly than anything else, how in the great monasteries the headship had become the hereditary property of the tribe, and how firm was the grasp of tribal Christianity on the country. Naturally St. Bernard would regard such a state of things as making the country, though nominally Christian, yet really Pagan.

The monastery of Armagh was in the territory of the Hy Niall, one of whom, Daire, granted the site to Patrick.[1] The early abbots of the church, from the fifth to the eighth centuries, were all of the same tribe; subsequently the headship became the property of another branch of the tribe, who kept it for two centuries, and the last of whom, Celsus, was Malachi's predecessor in the See. Of these people St. Bernard says, "Denique jam octo extiterant ante Celsum viri uxorati et absque ordinibus literati tamen."[2] Celsus was abbot from 1106 to 1127. From the lists in Colgan, in the *Yellow Book of Lecan*, in the *Lebar Breac*, and in the *Book of Leinster*, illustrated by the details and chronology of the *Irish Annals*, a genealogical table of the abbots of Armagh can be constructed, confirming the truth of St. Bernard's statements as to the hereditary nature of the headship of the houses—statements probably made on information given him by Malachi himself.

Columba, the founder of Iona, was another member of the great tribe of Hy Niall. In this case it is particularly interesting to see how the succession to the abbacy devolved in a Celtic monastery out of Ireland. Here it seems the same hereditary rule prevailed. Columba died in 597; the

[1] *Book of Armagh*, fo. 6 b 2; printed in Rolls ed. *Tripartite Life*, ii, 290.
[2] *De Vita St. Malachiæ*, cap. x.

next abbot, Baithen, who died in 600, was his first cousin; Laisren, the third abbot, was the son of another cousin, he died in 605. The fourth abbot, Fergna, was a descendant of Columba's great uncle; he died in 623. The next, the fifth abbot, Seghin, was the nephew of Laisren, the third abbot; he died in 650. Nothing is known of the sixth abbot, but from him to the ninth abbot, Adamnan, all the abbots were not only members of the tribe of Hy Niall, but most of them of one family. So that for over a hundred years in the first great foreign Celtic monastery, there is only one abbot who cannot be proved to be of the family of the Saint, the founder. These facts are so overwhelming that Dr. Reeves is led to the conclusion, "that even in spiritual administration the element of clanship regulated the bestowal of authority, and the election of a religious superior was subject among the Irish to the qualifications of blood similar to those that constituted eligibility to secular clanship."[1]

After this it is hardly necessary to cite any further instances as to Ireland, but Dr. Petrie's[2] conclusions as to Clonmacnois may be mentioned. By analysing the monumental inscriptions there, he found that the ecclesiastical succession to the abbacy of that house had continued among persons of the same family (Malone) for several hundred years.

Such was the system in force in Ireland and Scotland. Independent groups of monasteries, the succession to the headship of which was provided for by strict rules, which, as administered, had the effect of keeping the headship in one family or tribe. The next question to answer is, Did this system apply to Wales? Unfortunately no Welsh abbot had his life written by Adamnan or St. Bernard, but still there is a good deal of evidence to show that the

[1] *Proceedings Royal Irish Academy*, vi, 451. [2] *Ibid.*, vi, 451.

Celtic system in Wales was the same as in Ireland and Scotland.

The monastery of Menevia was founded by David, in the country that was then under the rule of Sandde, a descendant of Ceredig, who was one of the family of "Cunedda and his sons"; David himself was grandson of Ceredig. David died in 601, and his reputed successor at Menevia was Cynog, the head of Llanbadarn Vaur. Llanbadarn had been founded by Padarn, one of David's companions at Llancarvan, and also probably a member of the Menevian house, and, if so, the reason for Cynog succeeding to Menevia would be in strict accordance with Celtic rule. David's tribe being exhausted, recourse was had to a daughter house, and from this the new head was taken. According to the *Liber Landavensis* the successor of David was his cousin Ishmael, and the third bishop, Teilo, was another cousin of David, being either uncle or brother to Ishmael. It therefore seems clear that so far as the early abbots of Menevia went, the succession was confined to the family of the Saint, that is, that the rule that prevailed in the Irish monasteries prevailed also in the Welsh, and was in fact the ordinary rule of the Celtic Church. If from Menevia we go to Llandaff, the same system is found to prevail. Dubricius is said to have founded Llandaff. He was said to have been the son of Eurddyl, daughter of Pebiau, king of Ergyng. Some doubt has been expressed as to this, and it is said her grandfather was Pepiau a son of Brychan. Dubricius was succeeded at Llandaff by Teilo, who was a cousin. Teilo was succeeded at Llandaff by his nephew Oudoceus. It will thus be seen that at Llandaff, as at Menevia, the first three heads of the monastery were related, that is, that the abbacy went in one family or tribe. It is fairly clear that the fact of the relationship of the early abbots

of the two great South Wales monasteries was not accidental, but was the result of the Celtic system that has been already shown to have existed in Ireland, and so must have also existed in Wales, modified doubtless by local considerations.

If this view is correct, and the evidence seems fairly conclusive, a considerable part of the usually accepted history of the early Church in South Wales becomes untenable. All the legends as to the archbishoprick of Carleon, its transfer to St. David's, and its re-transfer, are clearly out of place. The view of the hereditary system prevailing is confirmed by the later history of the see of St. David's in the eleventh century, with reference to Bishop Sulien and his sons succeeding to the see, and yet later, Giraldus speaks bitterly of "the infamous custom" that even then existed at St. David's, as to the ecclesiastical offices passing from father to son, and being part of the hereditary property of a particular family; but Giraldus does not seem to object so much to the hereditary right, if it is confined to uncles and nephews. It is therefore clear that the hereditary idea, which is only the tribal idea, existed in Wales to a comparatively late date, and the only reasonable account of the origin of the "infamous custom" would seem to be that it was part of the great Celtic ecclesiastical system.

When the third development of monasteries, the third order of saints, came into effect in Wales, it seems that the monks of the great monasteries went forth, founding, either for themselves, or for the good of their house, new monasteries, *dalta* churches, as they would be called in Ireland. This view explains a feature in Wales that it is otherwise very difficult to give any satisfactory reason for. Groups of churches still exist bearing the names of the heads of the great monasteries of Menevia and

Teilo, groups which may for shortness be termed the Dewi churches and the Teilo churches—how did these churches come into existence? They seem to have been monastic settlements, founded by these emissaries from the great monasteries, and, as such, bore the names of their source of origin. This matter will be dealt with at length when speaking of the different kinds of churches. Here it is only necessary to refer to it as marking another link in the chain of evidence as to the tribal nature of the Welsh monasteries, and the great similarity in their origin and ideas to the Irish. Probably it was by these settlements of daughter houses that the conversion of Wales was completed. Each of the large monasteries sent out bands of monks, who founded settlements, which gradually covered the whole country, or rather, the whole of the territories of the different chieftains. This shows the supreme importance of the Celtic monastic system. The country was split up into the territories of the various chiefs; the monks from the great monasteries formed settlements on the lands of each of the chiefs, and in this way the whole country was covered with a network of Christian institutions, all related to some one head, and those that emanated from that head being related to each other. The system in force, was, therefore, monastic, not diocesan christianity—groups of monastic houses, rather than groups of churches. Such a system was totally opposed to Latin ideas, if for nothing else, that each group was able to lay down for itself what were its rules and regulations; there was no central authority keeping the groups of independent houses under control.

In speaking of the connection between the Welsh and Irish monasteries, it is not right to pass over a piece of evidence that may be said to disprove the view here put

forward. In a list[1] entitled *De monasteriis Hiberniis inter extras gentes*, which appears to be a list, if not of Irish monasteries out of Ireland, at least of monasteries founded by Irish monks, twelve houses in Scotland, eight in England, thirteen in Brittany, and a number in France, Belgium, Lorraine, Burgundy, Switzerland, Germany, up to the Danube, and in Alsace and other places—altogether some eighty-eight houses—are mentioned, which are alleged to be due to the activity of the Celtic monks. But there is no mention whatever of Wales, or of anything to do with Wales; although the Irish claim to have founded Glastonbury and Malmesbury, they do not claim a single Welsh house. The only possible explanation is, that while the Welsh houses were, it is well known, full of Irish students, yet that either from the Welsh monasteries being founded before Ireland embraced the faith, or because the Welsh would not receive aid from Ireland, they are excluded from the list. It certainly is a curious incident, and goes some way to prove the length of time the Celtic monasteries had been in existence. It, however, in no way goes to negative the very constant intercourse that was then going on between Ireland and Wales.

It is often spoken of as a matter of wonder that monasticism was so successful among the Celts, and was such a prominent feature of the Celtic Church. There seem to be two main reasons for this, (1) that the monasteries were not merely monasteries, but were colonies of Christians, which, if a man became a Christian, and so a member of the tribe of the Saint, he must join. The fact of joining gave the person certain privileges, the chief of which was the right of sanctuary. To the desolate and oppressed, the monastery afforded a refuge that was unknown elsewhere—a place where the shedder of blood

[1] *Proceedings of Royal Irish Academy*, vi.

could be safe from the avenger of blood. When the lawless state of the society of these times is remembered, how each petty tribe had a blood-feud with its neighbour, the fact that there was a place where the oppressed was safe from the oppressor, gave such a place an enormous and peculiar importance. This is best shown from the weight the monks attached to the privilege of sanctuary, and the strictness with which they punished any violation of it. In the old Irish laws,[1] the violation of sanctuary at once made the offender liable to punishment. By the Welsh laws,[2] the penalty for a breach of sanctuary depended on the position and rank of the place violated. If it was a mother church, the penalty was higher than if it was one of a lower rank. The Welsh laws also gave protection, not merely to the person, but also to the property of the fugitive. His cattle, while in the churchyard, were exempt from seizure and were allowed to go with the abbot's cattle. So the monasteries gave to the people what they could get nowhere else—protection to person and property. With the power to bestow such rights, it is no wonder the monasteries prospered and throve. And it was not only to the great monasteries that the right of sanctuary belonged. Each little monastic settlement, that is, each church or chapel, offered shelter to the fugitive and forsaken. It is true that a fugitive was safer in a large than in a small monastery, because there were more persons to resist any attempt to violate the sanctuary, and the penalty for violation was larger, and therefore a greater deterrent; but yet every church and churchyard, however small, in theory at least gave the right of protection, and this was better than nothing.

(2) The second great cause of the popularity of the monas-

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iv, 235, 237.
[2] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 433.

teries, and this applies equally to all, small as well as great, was, that they were the only places of instruction then in existence. Mr. Skene[1] points out how in this respect the Celtic system differed from the Latin, and how the latter would probably have proved a failure under the conditions the former had to deal with. The Celts did not commence their work, as the Latins would have done, by arguing against idolatry, superstition, and immorality, and by preaching a purer faith. They settled down as a Christian colony, and offered to a people, who had no security against violence and cruelty, protection and peace; to a people who desired to be instructed, instruction in all that was to be taught; and so, working on these lines, they succeeded.

It is difficult to say how long the system of Celtic monasticism lasted in Wales in its vigour and at its best. It was probably in full force at the time of Augustine's arrival, for although the record of the conference between the two Churches, as we have it, is a later invention, yet it is to be noted that all the Celtic representatives who are alleged to have taken part in it are described as "Episcopi sive doctores maximæ et proximæ Britonum provinciæ,"[2] which would equally apply to abbots, and shows that the important persons in the Welsh Church of that time were the heads of monastic houses. Gradually, in the next four hundred years, between the coming of Augustine and the Norman conquest, the small Welsh monasteries, the daughter houses, languished, and only the large ones remained as monasteries. The history of the Celtic Church in Wales from the arrival of Christianity to the coming of St. Augustine is the history of the establishment and growth of monasticism. The history of that Church from the arrival of Augustine to the

[1] *Celtic Scotland*, ii, 73. [2] Bede, *Eccl. Hist.*, ii, 2.

Norman conquest is the story of the decay of that monasticism, the transformation of the monastic houses into local churches, and the rise of episcopal jurisdiction in Wales. Probably intercourse with England brought this change about, or helped to do so. The vanity of the Welsh abbots, who wanted to be on the same footing, to possess the same powers and privileges, as their Anglo-Saxon rivals, led to it. The Abbot of Llandaff aped the airs of the Bishop of Hereford, and the Abbot of Menevia copied the customs of the Bishop of Lichfield. It is easy enough to understand how this conduct brought about the change; the difficult question is to account for the disappearance of such houses as Llancarvan and Llaniltyd, a disappearance as complete as if there had been an early Welsh measure of disestablishment and disendowment.

The state of the Celtic Church in Wales would appear to have been that some seven or eight large monasteries existed, and that they and their offshoots formed the local churches that represented Christianized Wales. Of the precise number of these offshoots it is difficult to get any exact idea. Evidence points to the fact that they were more numerous than the modern parish churches. The relation between the large and small monasteries gradually altered until the large monasteries which survived, after a series of changes, developed into bishops' sees, the smaller monasteries into local churches. The change as to the large monasteries seems to have been nearly complete at the time of Hywel Da's code, as then the bishop and the abbot appear in many respects on an equal footing; but differences still remained. The abbot represented the tribe of the Saint; the bishop did not, unless he was also abbot. An abbot's goods on his death went to the tribe of the Saint, a bishop's to the king, as the bishop had no tribe. The two officials were the

representatives of the two different systems of government that were then struggling in Wales for the mastery. The bishop the personal rule, the abbot the tribal.

This system of tribal monasticism, which has been attempted to be described in this chapter, gave its whole tone to the Celtic Church, and furnishes the real explanation of all her anomalies and peculiarities. When once its principle is thoroughly grasped, it effectually disposes of two very common ideas in early Welsh ecclesiastical history. (1) Of the pilgrimages to Rome of the early Welsh saints and abbots. As they admitted no power in Rome over themselves or their work, they had no reason to go there to propitiate the Pope; as they considered themselves independent, they were not likely to take a tedious journey to make themselves dependent. And (2) as to the existence of archbishopricks in Wales. As the head of a Celtic monastery admitted no superior, as he considered himself, like Henry VIII, "supreme head next after Christ," he was not likely to have submitted to an archbishop, whom, if he did not regard as the emissary of the evil one, he would at least regard as the emissary of the enemy. To any one who considers what was the position of a bishop in that series of independent monasteries and their offshoots that made up the Celtic Church, the very notion of an archbishop is so absurd, that it is impossible to entertain it.

CHAPTER V.

BISHOPS.

The different positions they occupied, and the light in which bishops were respectively regarded in the Latin and in the Celtic Churches, point to another most important divergence between the ideas of the two bodies. It is true that each Church possessed the three orders—bishops, priests, and deacons—but the position occupied by bishops in the two Churches differed very widely. The great resemblance between the Latin and the Celtic bishop was in name. According to the ideas of the Latin Church, a bishop is an ecclesiastical official, possessing, or claiming to possess, an exclusive jurisdiction over all ecclesiastical matters within a defined area, his diocese; a jurisdiction based on a twofold authority, (1) as being, or claiming to be, a successor of the Apostles, and (2) as being the delegate of the Vicar of Christ, the successor of St. Peter. According to the ideas of the Celtic Church, a bishop was a monastic official, but without any claim to jurisdiction over any area, defined or undefined, without any right from any "foreign prince, state, or potentate", a mere monastic officer under the control and orders of the Abbot. The tendency has been to forget the Celtic idea, and to substitute for it the Latin. Hence have arisen the metropolitan claims of St. David's, and the still prevalent fiction that the early history of the four Welsh dioceses has been destroyed or lost. It is as clear as anything can be, that there were no such personages as Celtic archbishops,

no such areas as early Celtic territorial dioceses. It is impossible to understand the history of the Welsh Celtic Church, unless this distinction between diocesan jurisdiction and episcopal functions is clearly borne in mind. In the Celtic Church the former was non-existent, the latter flourished in full vigour.

The main differences between the Latin and Celtic bishops will best be grouped under three heads: (1) Qualifications, (2) mode of consecration, (3) position and duties; in each of these the difference is marked, and the contrasts striking.

(1.) As to the first, the qualifications. The Latin Church held it necessary that a person qualified to be consecrated bishop must have passed through at least the two ecclesiastical orders of deacon and priest, if not the minor orders as well. The Celt thought otherwise; a man might become a bishop at once, *per saltum*, without passing through any orders at all. The best known instance of this is the story of Columba, given in the Scholia to the *Martyrology of Œngus the Culdee*.[1] Columba desired to be consecrated a bishop, and therefore went to bishop Etchen to have the order of bishop conferred upon him. Columba sat under the tree on the west side of the church, and asked, "Where was the cleric?" A man replied, "There he is in the field, where they are ploughing below." Columba replied, "It is not meet for us that a ploughman should confer orders on us, but let us test him." They went to the bishop, asked him first for his ploughshare, which he at once gave them, yet the oxen went on ploughing. Columba said he is a good man, let us test him further. They then asked for the outer ox; he gave it to them, and ordered a wild ox to take its

[1] See Introduction to the *Book of Obits and Martyrology of Christ Church, Dublin*, published by Irish Archæological Society, Dublin, 1844, p. liv.

place, which the wild ox did. Columba was now satisfied, and told the bishop why he had come. The bishop replied "It shall be done", and conferred on him the order of a priest, although what Columba wanted was the order of a bishop. Etchen prayed until the next day. Columba said, "I regret thou hast conferred this order upon me, but I will never change it while I live, but no person shall ever again have orders conferred upon them in this church." Such is the legend; it discloses one or two points of interest. It has been always held to be the reason why Columba remained a priest to the day of his death, and why his successors, the abbots of Iona, were forbidden to hold any higher ecclesiastical rank than priest's orders. It also shows that one of the Celtic bishop's sources of revenue was the fee for bestowing orders; that there was some fee payable for them, and that Columba's curse which prohibited orders being conferred in that church in the future, was a punishment to bishop Etchen, by depriving him of the fees belonging to his office. For the present purpose, the noteworthy fact is, that although Columba was not, for some reason—ignorance or stupidity—consecrated a bishop, yet there seems to have been no objection raised to the fact that being at most in deacon's orders, even if he was that,[1] he was not eligible for consecration as bishop. It is obvious, from the legend, that there was nothing in any way regarded as remarkable in the fact of the consecration of a person, if not a layman, at least only in deacon's orders, to be a bishop at once. It seems to have been nothing unusual, Columba expected it, and went for the express purpose of being made a bishop. It follows, that in the opinion of the author of the legend, there was nothing exceptional or remarkable in the consecration of bishops

[1] See *Adamnan*, ii, c. 1.

per saltum, that is, without passing through the intermediate orders.[1]

Turning to the Celtic Church in Wales, we find the same thing. There is not, indeed, an express statement, as in the case of Columba, of this consecration *per saltum*, yet we read of persons being made bishops without any mention that they were previously in orders. David, who is said to have been consecrated archbishop by the patriarch of Jerusalem, does not appear, from any of his lives, to have been previously in orders. Samson is described as a noble young man of excellent life, who preferred to dwell with his master to being made a bishop. It is said that Samson, on being appointed bishop of Dol,[2] was taken to Dubricius, bishop of Llandaff, that he might receive from him the first ecclesiastical orders and deaconship. It thus appears that when appointed to the bishopric of Dol he was a layman. The only orders Cybi is ever said to have had, are those of a bishop from Hilary.[3] Padarn was said to be a bishop, but there is no account of how he became so. Teilo, who, like David, was consecrated at Jerusalem, is not said, and does not appear from his life, to have passed through the inferior orders.

It is dangerous to argue from mere non-statements in the *Lives of Saints*, and if these facts stood alone they would be of little weight; but, as it appears, that after the lives were edited by Latin writers as were the lives in the *Book of Llandaff*, mention is carefully made of Dubricius and Samson passing through minor orders before being made bishops, the inference becomes very strong that the Latin scribe, finding that the Celt had recorded a consecration *per saltum*, considered it his duty to omit such a heresy to make the account suitable for reading in public,

[1] See the case of Victor, *Tripartite Life*, Rolls ed., i, 182.
[2] *Cambro-British Saints*, 171. [3] *Ibid.*, 183.

and edited it so as to appear that all the orders had been obtained, and that the consecration was regular, according to the rules of the Latin Church. It is only in the old Welsh lives, where the matter is mentioned more by inference than by direct statement, that it appears at least doubtful if a person was not ordained bishop without any previous orders. If the Celts did not attach any great importance, as it would appear they did not, to the position of bishop, the omission of the other orders would not be unnatural. The bishop was not a person of such importance that the Celts found it necessary to make a great fuss about him. They had no belief in apostolic succession, or the mystical powers of the bishop; what they wanted was a man to fill a certain position in the monastery, and a fit man was appointed, whether he had been previously ordained or not. Abbots, who were then the great ecclesiastical dignitaries of the Celtic Church, could be either laymen or elected from laymen; why should not bishops, who were but subordinate officials, be selected in the same way?

These being the different views of the two Churches, there was nothing to the Celtic mind either singular or irregular in the election of bishops *per saltum*, and such was the practice in that Church.

(2.) The next distinction between the Celtic and Latin Bishops was in the mode of consecration.

The Latin rule was expressed so far back as the Fourth Council of Carthage, the second canon of which provides:—"Episcopus cum ordinatur duo episcopi ponant et teneant evangeliorum codicem super caput et cervicem ejus et uno super eum fundente benedictionem reliqui omnes episcopi qui adsunt manibus suis caput ejus tangant,"[1] and this

[1] Proctor, *On the Book of Common Prayer*, 413, citing canons of Fourth Council of Carthage, A.D. 398, Canon II

rule has been followed in the Anglican ordinal. It never prevailed in the Celtic Church; there, consecration by a single bishop was the practice. The case of Columba already mentioned, shows this clearly, but there is other evidence of it. In the *Life of St. Kentigern*, his biographer, Jocelin, says, that when he was made bishop, as usual, a bishop was sent for from Ireland to do it.[1] "Accitoque uno episcopo de Hybernia more Britonum et Scotorum tunc temporis in pontificem consecrari fecerunt. Mos inolevit in Britannia in consecratione pontificum tantummodo capita eorum sacri crismatis infusione perungere cum invocatione Sancti Spiritus et benedictione et manus impositione quem ritum dicebant insipientes se suscepisse divinæ legis institutionem et Apostolorum traditionem. Sacri vero canones sanctificant ut nullus episcopus consecretur absque tribus ad minus episcopis; uno videlicet consecratore qui sacramentales benedictiones et orationes ad singula insignia pontificalia super sacrandam dicat et duo alii cum eo manus imponant; testes existant; textum evangeliorum cervici illius impositam teneant."

This passage shows clearly the difference between the Celtic and the Latin modes of consecration; the Latin required at least three bishops—one, who acted as the consecrating bishop, gave the oath, delivered the insignia of office, and pronounced the blessing; the other two acted as assistants. The Celtic ceremony was simple; oil was poured on the new bishop's head, the Holy Spirit invoked, the consecrating bishop laid his hands on the candidate and pronounced the blessing; no delivery of the Bible, nò oath of obedience, none of the other forms of authority and subjection found in the Latin service were required. This difference, it is clear, arose from the

[1] Jocelin, *Vita Kentig.*, cap. xi.

different positions the bishops occupied in the two Churches. The Celtic bishop did not take the oath of obedience to an archbishop; he owed him no allegiance, —there was no archbishop, the abbot was his superior. When the Latin Church, on Augustine's arrival, came into contact with the Celtic, the question as to the validity of orders conferred by one bishop arose, and formed one of the points Augustine submitted to Gregory the Great. "Si longinquitas itineris magna interjaceat ut episcopi non facile valeant covenire an debeat sine aliorum episcoporum præsentia episcopus ordinari? Respondit Gregorius. Et quidem in Anglorum ecclesia in qua adhuc solus tu Episcopus inveniris ordinare episcopum non aliter nisi sine Episcopis potes."[1] Gregory goes on to say that unless Augustine can get bishops over from Gaul, he must consecrate by himself. He advises Augustine to have as many priests as possible present, and as soon as there were in Britain a sufficient number of bishops, no bishop should be consecrated without the presence of three or four others. Gregory therefore gives no instructions to deviate from the Latin ordinal, except in the case of necessity, when only one bishop was available; obviously the rest of the Latin form was carried out, and there was no concession in any way to Celtic ideas. Consecration by a single bishop in cases of necessity, if the Latin ordinal was used, does not seem to have been regarded as invalid. It was the consecration by a single bishop with a different ordinal that roused the Latins against the Celtic Church. But the custom was very firmly rooted, and continued in Ireland until after the time of William I. One of the complaints that Anselm, when Archbishop of Canterbury, when writing to Muirchertach, an Irish prince, makes against the Irish Church was,

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, i, c. 27.

"Ab uno episcopo episcopum sicut quemlibet presbyterum ordinari."[1]

There are traces of this custom prevailing in the Welsh Church. In the life of Teilo, given in the *Liber Landavensis*, it is stated that he consecrated Ismael; no one else is mentioned as assisting.[2] The same may be said of Samson.[3] David, Teilo, and Padarn were consecrated by the Patriarch at Jerusalem. But the most interesting case is that of Chad. He was a Celtic bishop, and for some reason retired into the monastery of Lastingham; from thence he went to be the Mercian bishop, and was re-consecrated by the Latins on resuming his work as a bishop, probably because the Latins considered the Celtic orders invalid.

The question as to consecration has a greater importance than appears at first sight. One of the difficult points of Welsh ecclesiastical history is the alleged consecration of Welsh bishops by the Archbishop of Canterbury. At times, from about 870, bishops of Llandaff, Cevilliauc and Libiau, and a bishop of St. David's, Lumbert, are said to have been consecrated by Athelred, Archbishop of Canterbury, and there are other instances down to the beginning of the twelfth century, when the time of the Norman bishops is reached. If the Welsh Church was an independent body, how came the Archbishop of Canterbury to exercise control over it during the time of Welsh freedom? The easiest way out of the difficulty is to say that the entries are the forgeries of the Llandaff monks; but that is not a satisfactory way of dealing with the matter, and the example of Chad seems to point to the true solution. The Welsh bishops were monastic; their consecration by the Celtic bishops was ample for the

[1] Anselm, Op., ed. 1721, *Epistolæ*, iii, 147.
[2] *Liber Landavensis*, 109, old ed. [3] *Ibid.*, 103.

monastic official, he required nothing more for acting as bishop in the monastery; but if he had to act outside the monastery, over a district that was ruled by different petty kings, who owned no common power, who did not admit the jurisdiction of the monastery over them, something more was required; and, as when Chad ceased to be a monastic bishop, and became the bishop of the Mercians, that is, of the tribes that formed the West Midlands, he sought from the Archbishop of Canterbury reconsecration, or rather, a gift of further and more extended powers. So the Welsh bishops, when they came to act outside the limits of their monasteries, and began to seek the exercise of territorial jurisdiction, desired to base their claim to do so on something more powerful than the consecration of some monastic official who might be quite good enough for a monastic bishop, but was not of sufficient importance for one who claimed, not merely episcopal functions, but also diocesan jurisdiction. If this is so, the consecration of Welsh bishops by the Archbishop of Canterbury, following Chad's example, is the first step on the road from monastic to diocesan episcopacy, and explains how it was that the Welsh bishops came to admit foreign authority, and to accept foreign orders. This view is borne out by the fact, that it was mainly after the Llandaff bishops began to seek consecration from Canterbury that they commenced that system of plundering the Welsh princes by means of ecclesiastical censure and excommunication, of which the *Liber Landavensis* is the record. A monastic bishop might have gone on excommunicating as long as he liked, without producing much effect, but a bishop who possessed, or claimed to possess the unknown powers of a successor to the apostles, who might be able to deal in the supernatural, was in a very different position, and it may well be that to get the

additional power to overawe the Welsh princes, the bishops thought it worth their while to submit to reconsecration, as the means of obtaining those supernatural powers that the Celtic form of consecration did not pretend to confer.

The probable reason for the Celts adopting the form of consecration by one bishop was due to the idea of monastic bishops. In his monastery the bishop could exercise, without any interference from any one, all episcopal functions that the monastery required. One of these was conferring orders, and if the bishop could confer orders on priests and deacons, why could he not on bishops? If a new bishop was wanted for any of the monastic colonies, he would come to the bishop of the mother house to obtain consecration, and no Celtic bishop would ever think of calling in any one to help him, for two reasons: the Celtic monasteries were jealous of each other, for a monastery to admit that their bishop could not perform his duties, would be an admission of inferiority, the last thing a Celt would think of making; and in the next place, either the bishop, or the monastery, or both, received fees for conferring orders. If other bishops were admitted, they would be entitled to part of the fees, and this would not be pleasing either to the monastery or to the bishop. Consequently there was the strongest motive for the Celt, as long as the bishops remained monastic, to try and maintain the complete independence and power of each bishop, that is, of each monastic house. Probably the love of independence and the love of money kept the Celtic form of consecration in force for the length of time it continued; and the feeling that gradually arose, that the Latin bishop was the more powerful, and so could do more and thus earn more than the other, led the Celtic bishop to try to imitate him, to do as he did, and so to get their powers

augmented even at the price of their independence. It has been the custom to minimize the divergences between the two forms of consecration, and to say it was, after all, only in very trifling matters of detail. It doubtless was so, and was of little real importance whether one or more bishops took part in the ceremony; but underneath it all lay a very important point, namely, the question of monastic or territorial episcopacy. The struggle between the two systems really involved the question of English suzerainty, or Welsh independence. It must also be remembered that Augustine and Gregory counted the Celtic bishops ordained by the Celtic ordinal as having been irregularly consecrated, and not bishops, but schismatics; yet at the present day the bishops of the Welsh Sees, who are either the successors of the Latin prelates or nothing, with strange disregard to history claim to be the successors of those old Celts whom the Latins repudiated with scorn. The bishop of St. David's calls himself the one hundred and seventeenth bishop of the See, the direct successor of St. David; yet he has certainly no claim to this—he is the successor of Bernard, the Norman bishop, but certainly not of David. It is extremely doubtful if David was ever bishop at all, if so, he was a Celtic, not a Latin prelate, and if the present bishops really are true to their profession—a schismatic.

(3.) The third and most important point of difference between the bishops of the two Churches was in their position and duties. This difference between the two has been an old cause of complaint. Anselm, in his letter to Muirchertach, already mentioned, says,[1] "Item dicitur episcopos in terra vestra passim eligi et sine certo episcopatus loco constitui." Thus clearly referring to bishops without any definite diocese. St. Bernard, in his life of

[1] *Epist.*, iii, 147.

St. Malachi, says that throughout Ireland an unheard of custom prevailed, "Nam (quod inauditum est ab ipso Christianitatis initio) sine ordine, sine ratione, mutabantur et multiplicabantur episcopi pro libitu metropolitani; ita ut unus episcopatus uno non esset contentus sed singulæ pene ecclesiæ singulos haberent episcopos."[1] It is therefore clear from these passages that in the twelfth century the system of bishops without sees, that is, of non-diocesan episcopacy, still existed. The probable explanation is that each Celtic church was originally a monastic establishment, complete in itself, with all the proper officials who were required to carry on the government of the church. An official was necessary to carry on that part of the duties which consisted of ordaining priests and consecrating bishops; such official would be part of the monastic establishment, and such official was the bishop. In the exercise of his episcopal functions he was supreme; no one else in the monastery was entitled to interfere with him or usurp those functions, not even the abbot himself. But, as an official of the house, he was subject to the abbot, and had to obey his orders in the same way that any other member of the monastery was bound to do. He possessed no right of jurisdiction, no power even over the monks of the monastery; he was subject to the jurisdiction of the abbot in everything but the actual conferring of orders. With the exercise of his episcopal functions the abbot had no right to interfere. This was the monastic episcopacy of the Celtic Church, as different from the diocesan episcopacy of the Latin as it is possible to imagine. Monastic episcopacy was not confined to Ireland; it went with the Celtic Church as one of her leading features. In Scotland, in Columba's abbey of Iona, there is the express testimony of Bede

[1] *De Vita Malachi*, c. x.

to show it was in full operation. He says,[1] "Habere autem solet ipsa insula rectorem semper abbatem presbyterum cujus juri et omnis provincia et ipsi etiam episcopi ordine inusitato debeant esse subjecti, juxta exemplum primi doctoris illius qui non episcopus sed presbyter extitit et monachus." It will be remembered that Columba was not a bishop for the reason already given,[2] and that he and the abbots of Iona were only priests. It follows, therefore, from this passage, that, at Iona, the presbyter abbot was supreme over the monastery, that some of the members of the monastery were bishops, and that over these the priest abbot had power and authority. This, therefore, shows that in the Scotch branch of the Celtic Church, monastic, as opposed to diocesan episcopacy, was the custom that prevailed.

From Scotland, missionary colonies of the Celtic Church went out to the North of England. One of these colonies founded the great monastery of Holy Island. Here we have also Bede's testimony that the same state of things existed. He says,[3] "Omnes presbyteri, diaconi, cantores, lectores, ceterique gradus ecclesiastici monachicam per omnia cum ipso episcopo regulam servent." It is therefore plain that the bishop or bishops in a Celtic monastery, whether in Ireland, Scotland, or England, were under the abbot's orders—formed part of the establishment of the monastic family, were in no sense the heads of the house, and had no jurisdiction or authority outside the territory of the monastery. The case does not rest here. The swarms of Celts who went to the continent "conquering and to conquer", founded monasteries there, and there the same rule prevailed; the Celtic missionaries took with them the principle of the supremacy of the abbot,

[1] *Hist. Eccl.*, iii, c. 4. [2] See *ante*, p. 209.
[3] *Vita S. Cuthberti*, cxvi.

the subordination of the bishop to him. Among the charters of the Irish monastery of Honau, a place on the Rhine, near Strasbourg, there is one of the abbot Beatus. This charter is signed by the abbot first, as abbot, then by seven bishops and priests, of eight churches which were tributary to the monastery. Dr. Reeves discusses this charter in a paper in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*,[1] and points out that the abbot signs first, and signs himself simply "*Abbas*." "A state of ecclesiastical procedure like that of Hy and other Irish monasteries where bishops were often subjected to presbyters, and abbatial rank was the grand criterion of jurisdiction." It will, therefore, be seen that wherever the Celtic Church went she took with her the idea of monastic episcopacy as one of her peculiar and distinctive features. There is no trace of territorial or diocesan jurisdiction—no idea of a bishop having authority over all or any ecclesiastics; he was a monastic official, and nothing more.

Most writers admit—indeed, in the face of the evidence it would be impossible to do otherwise—the existence of monastic episcopacy in the Celtic Church, but say that this part of the institutions of that Church did not extend to Wales. It would require some very strong evidence to prove this, as the inference would be against it, seeing that wherever the Celtic Church went, there monastic episcopacy is to be found. Yet most modern writers boldly assert that monastic episcopacy did not exist in Wales. Most of them are content to quote as conclusive, a passage in *Haddan and Stubbs*,[2] as settling the matter. "There is no trace at any time in that country (Wales) of any system resembling the Irish and Scotch (namely of government by abbots with bishops as subordinate officers, discharging episcopal functions, but

[1] See *Transactions*, vi, 461. [2] i, p. 143.

without jurisdiction), or, indeed, of any other system whatever than that of a diocesan episcopate." If, however, assertion is not taken for evidence, it is impossible to say there is no trace of monastic episcopacy in the Welsh Celtic Church. Bede is again the authority to be cited, in the list of canons passed at the council of Hertford, in 673. One he gives goes a long way to prove the existence of monastic episcopacy in the Welsh Celtic Church. That Council, it will be remembered, was held by Archbishop Theodore for, amongst other purposes, defining the boundaries of the English dioceses as they then existed, in other words, "locating" the bishops. On doing this for the authorized bishops, it was necessary to make some provisions as to the unauthorized ones. This was carried out by the fourth canon, which, according to the reading in the early printed editions of Bede, and that adopted by Spelman, is as follows: "Ut episcopi monachi non migrent de loco ad locum hoc est de monasterio ad monasterium nisi per dimissionem proprii abbatis sed in ea permaneant obedientia quam tempore suæ conversionis promiserunt."[1] Clearly recognising monastic bishops, and providing that they shall remain in their own monasteries under the control of their own abbots, and not wander about. In the face of this, it is impossible to say that there is no trace of monastic bishops. Those who object to the Celtic idea, however, try to get rid of this evidence by saying that the text is corrupted, and that it should read not "*episcopi monachi*", but "*ipsi monachi*". Dr. Smith, in his Cambridge edition of *Bede* (1722), is one of the first of the editors who insist on reading "*ipsi*". Smith speaks of the ignorance and absurdity of those who read "*episcopi*", as if the same rule prevailed in England as in

[1] *Hist. Eccl.*, iv, 5.

the monastery at Iona. "Mira fuit hic editorum ignorantia dicam vel oscitantia? Qui legerunt episcopi unde absurdissimam dederint eruditis controversiam ac si in hac etiam ecclesia sicut in Hiirense traditur episcopi abbatibus obedientiam debeant." As the rule admittedly prevailed in the monastery of Holy Isle, it is difficult to see the absurdity of supposing what is admitted existed there—what is admitted existed wherever the Celtic Church was found—should not exist in Wales and on the Welsh border. It seems more absurd,[1] as Dr. Todd points out, to suppose that a formal canon was made to prohibit monks themselves from migrating to other monasteries without the leave of their abbots, and enacting they must continue in the obedience which they had promised when they became monks. But read "*episcopi monachi*", and this is explained. Nothing could be more natural than that a monk, who had been raised to the episcopal order, should believe himself thereby relieved from monastic obedience, and at liberty in his episcopal character to visit other monasteries without the leave of his abbot; that is, either to try and increase his income by doing odd ordinations, or to try and assume the rights and powers of a Latin bishop, with jurisdiction over a certain area, not merely being content with his having power confined to the monastery. Haddan and Stubbs[2] give the reasons for the reading "*episcopi*" as Spelman's reading,[3] the improbability that any one would have changed "*ipsi*" and "*episcopi*", and the Scotch practice; they might have added "*episcopi*" is also the reading of Hardouin,[4] and of several of the early editions of Bede, such as that of Gravius (Antwerp, 1550). The reasons they give against it are Moore's MS., Alfred's translation of Bede, the apparent fact that Theodore took all his canons from old church Councils,

[1] *St. Patrick*, 49. [2] iii, 121. [3] *Concil.*, i, 153. [4] *Ibid.*, iii, 1016.

and these in particular from the Council of Calchedon (iv, 25), the fact that no "*episcopi monachi*" ever existed in an English monastery except as diocesan bishops presiding over the monastery as well as the see, and the connection in sense, of the canon reading "*ipsi*" with those before and after it. The last two reasons are hardly reasons at all; the penultimate one begs the question and ignores the case of Holy Island and the other instances. The last reason is very weak, as the third canon merely provides for the abbot's jurisdiction in his monastery, free from any episcopal control, and does not touch the point, whether that control is of the monastic or diocesan bishop; while the fifth canon, providing that no clergyman leave his own bishop and wander where he pleases, rather strengthens the reading "*episcopi*", which would make the fourth canon prohibit wandering bishops, the fifth prohibit wandering priests. This is borne out by reference to the sixth canon, which provides for the case of wandering bishops and priests, *episcopi atque clerici peregrini*. If "*episcopi*" is read in the fourth canon, the whole four are consistent: monasteries not subject to episcopal jurisdiction, but the abbot's power remains; bishops not to wander about, but stay in their own monasteries; clergy not to wander and leave their own bishops; wandering bishops and clergy not to do duty without the consent of the local bishop—but if "*ipsi monachi*" is read, the connection between the four canons is lost, and they are rendered meaningless. With regard to the argument that the canons are taken from old church councils, it does not seem entitled to great weight. It may well be that "the Greek monk", Theodore, who was trying to force the rule of the Latin Church upon the country, applied canons, made for a very different state of things, to the conditions of the English Church; but even assum-

ing that he did so, this is no argument against the reading "*episcopi*", and the question thus becomes one of what is the true reading from the MSS.? It may be pointed out that while the contraction "*epi*" might be very well mistaken for "*ipsi*", it is not likely that the converse would be the case, and "*ipsi*" changed into "*episcopi*".

It must also be remembered that Theodore was sent by the Pope to England to stamp out Celtic Christianity, that an African abbot, Adrian, was sent with him to see that nothing of the Eastern Church was introduced. If the story of Theodore waiting at Rome for his hair to grow, (his head, after the eastern custom, being entirely shaved[1]), that he might wear the Latin tonsure, is true, it will be seen with what infinite care he was made to conform to each detail of the Latin ritual, and it will not be wondered at that he should try to stamp out such a Celtic heresy as monastic bishops, and still more, try to justify his conduct by an appeal to the Councils of the Church. Whether they were applicable or not, did not matter, if they could be adapted for the occasion it was all that was required. Another version of the canon is given by Montalembert, who, of course, adopts the reading "ipsi".[2] He says the canons were marked by the Benedictine spirit, since the greater part of the bishops in the Council were the sons of St. Benedict; and the one forbidding monks to pass from one monastery to another without the permission of the abbot, was an affirmation of the vow of stability, which, though often neglected, was not the less an essential distinction of the order of St. Benedict from the great monastic communities of the East or of Celtic countries. It must also be remembered that Theodore was the most bitter opponent of everything to do with the Celt; that it was he who brought about

[1] Montalembert, *Moines d'Occident*, iv, 210. [2] *Ibid.*, iv, 227.

the re-consecration of Chad, and seems to have been the author of the law,[1] "Qui ordinati sunt Scottorum aut Brittonum episcopi qui in pascha vel tonsura catholicæ non sunt adunati ecclesiæ, iterum a catholico episcopo manus impositione confirmentur." With such an opponent all the probabilities are in favour of Theodore trying to stamp out the Celtic monastic bishops. On his visit to Holy Island he must have met with this, to him, abomination, and when trying to frame rules for his Church, the probabilities are, he would attempt to deal with this, which was not merely a peculiarity, but a vital part of the organization of the Celtic Church.

Even if the matter rested on the passage of Bede, it would not be accurate to say that no trace of the Celtic system was found in the Celtic Church of Wales, that it is only one piece, a very important piece it is true, of the evidence in support of the existence of monastic bishops in that Church. Other matters have also to be considered:—(1) The first is the remarkable absence of the early history of any of the four Welsh dioceses. From the time of their alleged foundation, until the time of the Norman conquest, the history of these sees is practically a blank. There is, in the case of St. David's, a string of names of alleged bishops, but as the historians of that see truly say,[2] "We are presented with a list of bishops, but we have nothing beyond their names, neither is their existence proved by any contemporary authority." Except the names we hear nothing, and, admitting that the names represent bishops, it must be conceded that they prove nothing as to what the bishops were, whether monastic or diocesan; they might just as well be the one as the other. This difficulty is usually met by saying that, as to Llandaff, there is a

[1] *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, ii, 64.
[2] *Jones and Freeman*, 257.

history which will be found in the *Book of Llandaff*; that the other three sees were so repeatedly plundered and ravaged by the Danes and by the Irish, that the absence of records is thus accounted for—they perished in the sack of the monasteries. The difficulty in accepting this explanation is, that it assumes something to have been destroyed of which there is not the smallest proof that it ever existed. To assume that all the records are destroyed, and on this to assert the existence of an institution and say that there is no trace to be found of anything else, is hardly a fit way of dealing with an important question. The fair way to state the matter is to say that there are no early records of the three Welsh Sees to give direct evidence either way, for or against monastic or diocesan episcopacy, and that therefore the evidence must be sought elsewhere. The case of Llandaff is different. There has come down to us what purports to be an abstract of a collection of documents relating to the early history of this see, which, it is said, extends from the time of its foundation to about 1130. This collection is known as the *Liber Landavensis*, or the *Book of Teilo*. In considering its importance as an historical document, the circumstances under which it was made must be borne in mind. In 1133, it became necessary, in consequence of litigation between the Norman Bishop of Llandaff, Urban, and the Norman Bishop of St. David's, Bernard, as to the boundaries of the two dioceses, for the Bishop of Llandaff to prove his title to those parts of St. David's, which he claimed as belonging to his diocese, the churches that bore the name of Teilo, and which are usually spoken of as the Teilo churches. To do this the *Liber Landavensis* was drawn up, and it purports to set out the various grants from the different Welsh princes, giving to the Llandaff house the various lands and places that it then claimed. It is therefore

nothing more or less than the Llandaff statement of their title to the lands and places they claimed to be theirs. It has probably been added to at different times, for in addition to the title to the lands, a good deal of extraneous matter, such as the lives of the founder of the see and of the first bishops is added. The book, therefore, contains the title of the Llandaff church to its lands, and certain biographical notices. The former *may* be genuine and of historical value, the latter can only be the embodiment of the then current traditions at the time of compilation. As to the legal part, it is quite possible that some of the documents may be genuine, but it is almost certain that a large number of them are not. The monks had to prove their case, and they would have been a disgrace to their order if they lost their case by allowing any breaks in their chain of documents to appear. Haddan and Stubbs say of it,[1] "That real materials existed for the compilation of the book is rendered probable by the existence of the memorandum, of probably the ninth century, on the margin of the *Book of St. Chad*, now at Lichfield, but once the property of Llandaff. . . . The internal evidence of the book is sufficient to prove that all the earlier charters contained in it were not contemporary with their professed dates, but were drawn up at a much later period, probably not long before the compilation of the volume itself, and are simply statements, founded upon varying amounts of information and cast into the form of charters, of the circumstances under which this or that church or land was possessed or claimed by the see of Llandaff in the twelfth century, at the time of an angry and protracted contest between that see and those of St. David's and Hereford for a large portion of their churches and lands." It is therefore an account drawn

[1] i, 147 n.

up by Latin monks for a special purpose, and while much that it contains may be genuine, much that it contains is certainly not. It is, therefore, no exception to the rule already stated, that there is no real history of the Welsh dioceses from their alleged foundation to the date of the Norman conquest. In the *Liber Landavensis* there are, as would be expected, frequent allusions to the bishop, but such allusions are, certainly in the earlier part, quite as applicable to the monastic as to diocesan bishops, and many of them, while quite consistent with monastic episcopacy, are wholly inconsistent with diocesan. All that is now alleged is, that the history of the Welsh sees before the conquest affords no evidence in support of diocesan episcopacy, beyond the natural inference a Latin chronicler would draw, that there being bishops there must be dioceses for them. Such inferences as there are apply rather to monastic than to diocesan episcopacy.

(2.) The legendary lives of the Welsh Saints, in the form in which we have them, are mainly the productions of the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. They do not contain very much information on the matter. Here and there allusions to bishops are met with, and some of such allusions might be relied on in support of monastic bishops, others in support of diocesan bishops; but it must always be borne in mind when dealing with these lives that they are, at best, the revisions of Latin monks, written for Latin monks, to advance the ideas and beliefs of the Latin Church, and that, therefore, they are the last place where we should look for evidence in support of a Celtic system as opposed to a Latin.

(3.) Another great source of information on Welsh ecclesiastical history is the Welsh laws. Here will be found various passages relating to bishops, passages

which may be cited in support of either of the two systems—or what may with more accuracy be said, that the later laws point clearly to diocesan episcopacy, but in the earlier laws the provisions would apply in most cases to either; but in some few instances, such as the number of bishops present at the assembly at Whitland, when the laws were compiled, obviously referring to something other than diocesan episcopacy. It is only necessary to say here that the Welsh laws contain nothing against monastic bishops, and some things in favour of them. That if the Welsh laws stood alone, the inference to be drawn from them would be that the original state of things in Wales was monastic bishops; but, as time went on, the powers of the abbot declined, the powers of the bishop increased, until at last these two were on an equal footing, and ultimately the bishop superseded the abbot, first, as head of the monastery, then, as ruling over the possessions of the monastery, then, as ruling over a district, and lastly, as presiding over a diocese. It may be impossible to say how long monastic episcopacy lasted, but if the evidence is carefully examined, it leads to the belief that Wales was no exception to the other places where the Celtic Church prevailed, and that this very marked feature of her organization was equally found in Wales, as well as in Ireland, Scotland, and on the continent.

The real point in dispute between Latin and Celtic episcopacy is narrowed down to what was the position the early Welsh bishops occupied, for even Haddan and Stubbs[1] admit that in the early times of Christianity in Wales the bishops were not diocesan, but presided over monastic or educational institutions, as, for instance, Paulinus at Whitland, whom Ricemarch calls a bishop.

[1] i, 142.

So that really the existence of non-diocesan bishops being admitted, the sole point is, what position did the Welsh bishops hold in the monastery—were they under the rule of the abbot, or were they supreme, combining the functions of abbot and bishop? Here, again, there is an utter absence of direct evidence. A passage in the life of David would seem to show that the abbot was supreme. It will be remembered that David, assuming that he was abbot of the Menevian monastery, removed it from its old site to the new one he selected. It is clearly stated in the *Life* that there was a bishop connected with the old monastery.[1] When that was absorbed into the new monastery, of which David was the head, it would seem to follow that the bishop was under David's authority; so that here we find the abbot of the monastery, not a bishop himself, but having a bishop a member of the monastery, which is precisely the Irish and Scotch custom. It is not enough to do more than give rise to an inference, but as it is admitted that such was the Irish case, it is natural it should be so in a monastery as closely connected with Ireland as that of Menevia, and from which, to a great extent, Irish monasticism came.

If we turn to Ireland we find monastic bishops in full force. There, the bishops were regular monastic officials, under the orders of the head of the monastery, and that, whether the head was an ecclesiastic or a layman, a man or a woman. The strongest instance is that of Kildare, the monastery of which the "Blessed Bridget" was the head. After founding the monastery, on reflection, she considered she should not be without a bishop; so she fixed on a holy man, Condlaed, who lived near, and agreed with him to act as bishop, or, as it is said, "to govern the

[1] *Cambro-Brit. Saints*, 121.

church with her".[1] The bishop was quite under Bridget's control. He wanted to go to Rome, and asked her permission; she refused, but still he would go, and she then prayed that, as a punishment for his disobedience, he might meet with a sudden death by the road. When he got as far as County Wicklow, he was devoured by wild dogs.[2] It is difficult to find a stronger case than that of a bishop under the orders of an abbess. The bishop's position in the monastery does not appear to have been one of the highest rank. Bishops are found holding with the office of bishop[3] that of scribe, and in the Irish canons it is said that when a bishop is superseded for misconduct, his place is to be taken by the lector of the house. As the lector was not one of the great officials, it would seem to follow that neither was the bishop.

The most curious account of the position of the bishop is given in the Irish laws, in stating the penalties that a bishop who misconducts himself, "a stumbling bishop," incurs. "There are",[4] says the tract, "four dignitaries of a territory that may be degraded, a false judging king, a stumbling bishop, a fraudulent poet, an unworthy chieftain who does not fulfil his duties; *dire fine* is not due to these." Two of the MSS. add, "For a king is bound to observe truth, a bishop is bound to observe purity, every poet is bound to reject lies from his composition, a chief is bound to observe uprightness." The gloss goes on to define in very plain language an adulterous bishop, his "wickedness lowers

[1] In the *Martyrology of Gorman*, Condlaed is spoken of as bishop of Kildare and Bridget's craftsman (*hesidhe cerd Brigde*). Henry Bradshaw Society's Publications, vol. ix, p. 89.

[2] *Martyrology of Œngus*, 3rd May.

[3] Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii, 44.

[4] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., i, 55.

the man, he falls into evil." Therefore, as he fails to fulfil his duty, he is not entitled to *honor fine*, he has not full *honor fine* in consequence of a duty he does not perform. So far, all is clear; it is noticeable that the only offence mentioned against a bishop is unchastity. The gloss goes on to define the diminution of the *honor fine* that is dependent on whether the person possesses both worthiness (rank) and property with which he does good; if he has both, he has full *honor fine*; if worthiness without property, and does good, half *honor fine* of his grade; if worthiness without property, and does no good, only one *screpall*; if property without worthiness, and good is done, half *honor fine*; if worthiness without property one *screpall*, as "property does not increase *honor fine* unless good is done with it." This valuation of a man according to his rank and property, with the addition whether he does or does not do good with it, is peculiar; we are not told with whom the determination rested, if the man did or did not do good. The gloss goes on to state a series of acts, chiefly crimes of violence and theft, that in every instance deprived a man of half his *honor fine*, until the act was done a third time, when full *honor fine* was taken away. "Except among the grades of the church, if they commit it, it takes away their full *honor fine* from them at once, until they pay *eric fine*, do penance, and move from their grade, and they must be similarly punished if they have committed adultery."[1] It follows that the stumbling bishop, as above defined, at once lost his *honor fine* and his grade, that is, he at once became a man of no account, of no value, of no rank. A layman could commit these offences up to three times with only a partial loss of rank; a person in orders suffered a total loss of rank in the first instance. But the gloss, after repeating that on the first offence ecclesi-

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., i, p. 57.

astics lost all, goes on, "Adultery deprives ecclesiastical orders of full *honor fine* at once until they pay *eric fine*, and do penance, and they all return to their prior dignities, except the bishop who does not return, but becomes a hermit."[1] There seems to be, therefore, no doubt that the ecclesiastic who committed these offences, and lost his position, could for his first offence regain his position by fine and penance, unless he was a bishop. The bishop's position was peculiar; it is doubtful if, under any circumstances, he could come back to the grade of bishop, but he could attain a higher rank in the church; he might become a miracle worker (*thaumaturgist*), either as a hermit or as a pilgrim. It is difficult at first to see why a man could attain to a higher rank than his old one, and yet be debarred from regaining his old rank. A distinction is drawn between the married and unmarried bishop. The gloss says, "It is the virgin (unmarried) bishop only who does not recover his grade or his perfection again. The bishop of one wife does return when he performs penance within three days. . . . If wounding or theft, lying or adultery, be committed by a bishop or by a priest to whom marriage (adultery) is not allowed, they shall not resume the same dignities, even if they do penance and pay *eric fine*, or, as some say, it is the virgin bishop only that does not resume it, the bishop of one wife resumes it if he does penance in three days, . . and if they move from their dignity, they should attain to a higher one; and this is the change, the lector shall be installed in the bishopric, and the bishop shall become a hermit or pilgrim, and if the bishop, while in either of these conditions, commit trespasses they shall never have *honor price*, even although they should do penance, and pay *eric fine*."[1] Therefore the reason why the bishop does not regain his former place in the monas-

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., i, p. 7.

tery seems to be, that, if he falls, he has no longer any *honor fine* payable to the monastery. The house did not care to have an official who was valueless to it, in case he was injured or killed. He might be restored to his rank as bishop by penance and by penalties, but he did not regain his money value; he was therefore useless to the monastery. He could exercise his duties elsewhere as a hermit or as a pilgrim, but as a monastic bishop he was worthless. His place was given to the next monastic official, the lector, who had a money value. The bishop, having lost his money value, also lost his place in the monastery, otherwise he was much as before. These passages, with the canons, fix clearly the place of the monastic bishop in a Celtic monastery. He was the official next in rank above the lector.

The *Catalogue of the Irish Saints*, according to the different times, which has been already referred to,[1] gives a picture of what early Celtic Christianity was, and of its form, in which the distinguishing feature was bishops, a form which lasted about one hundred and fifty years, from the coming of Patrick to A.D. 543. Not the least striking part is the fact that there were said to be three hundred and fifty bishops—a number so enormous, if looked at from the Latin point of view, as to be absolutely incredible. While its exact accuracy is questionable, it may yet be taken to show the enormous number of bishops in the early Celtic Church, a fact which is confirmed by two other authorities. In the *Tripartite Life of Patrick*,[2] the number of bishops he is said to have made is put at three hundred and seventy, priests three thousand, and folk of every grade in the Church besides. In the *Litany of Œngus the Culdee*, it is said that Patrick ordained seven times fifty holy cleric bishops and three hundred priests.

[1] *Ante*, p. 155. [2] Rolls ed., i, p. 261.

It is curious that all these accounts of the early Irish Church make the number of bishops so large, and so nearly the same. That the figures are unreliable is certain, if from nothing else, that in the *Litany of Œngus* the number of bishops exceeds the number of priests. But, while not accepting the exact number, it is clear that the number of bishops in early times in the Celtic Church was out of all proportion to the requirements of the country from a diocesan point of view. Probably the numbers are greatly exaggerated. But assuming that the majority of the churches were monasteries, it will then not be so startling to find this large number of bishops, and the truth of St. Bernard's taunt, that every church had its bishop, will appear.[1] It is also noticeable that in the glimpse we get of the Celtic Church in Wales, the same disparity of numbers of bishops is found. In the account of the synod of Llanddewibrefi, given in the *Life of St. David*, the number of bishops is said to have been one hundred and eighteen,[1] a number as disproportionate for Wales as the three hundred and seventy was for Ireland, if diocesan episcopacy is looked at; but which, if monastic episcopacy is admitted, is, although exaggerated, not outrageously impossible. When the Celtic bishops are said to have taken part in the conference with Augustine, the numbers are brought down to seven, and given dioceses. As all but two of the bishops are confined to South Wales, it shows this account is not reliable; for even five bishops for South Wales is out of all proportion. In the laws of Hywel Da, the number of croziers—bishops, abbots, and priests—at Whitland is said to have been 180; the number of bishops is not separately given. It is clear that in all accounts of either the Celtic Church in Ireland, or Wales, the number of bishops is far too large to be consistent with any

[1] *Cambro-Brit. Saints*, p. 106.

idea of diocesan episcopacy, or to be capable of any other explanation than that of monastic episcopacy. The most reasonable explanation is, that most of the early churches, both in Ireland and Wales, were monastic, if not actually monasteries; that each monastery had a bishop as part of its establishment. This would appear to have been the normal state of things according to Celtic ideas, and from a passage in the *Martyrology of Œngus*,[1] it seems that some of the Irish monasteries were not content with a single bishop. An account is there given of the establishment of Mochta, a disciple of Patrick, who settled himself at Louth; in his monastery, or family, there were a number of bishops. "No poverty," it says, "had Mochta in the burgh of Louth. Three hundred priests, one hundred bishops there were with him." Here, again, it is probable, figures are exaggerated to enhance Mochta's reputation, but after making every deduction, the passage shows the enormous number of bishops that existed. It also brings out another point, that there was some proportion between the number of bishops and the number of priests, or, rather, the number of inmates of the monastery, and, possibly, the number of dependent churches. That each monastery, that is, each monastery of sufficient position and importance, possessed a bishop, or, possibly, more than one, among its inmates, seems fairly clear. It is confirmed by a passage in the *Life of Columba*, who, it is said, went in 590 from his monastery of Iona, to a synod at Drumcheatt, in the County Derry, attended by twenty bishops, forty priests, fifty deacons, and thirty students.[2] Even assuming the numbers grossly exaggerated, it shows that Columba had, as officials of the

[1] See the passage cited by Todd, *St. Patrick*, p. 30, where the lines left out in the *Donegal Martyrology* and the *Four Masters* are given.

[2] Reeves' *Antiquities of Down and Connor*, p. 132.

monastery of Iona and its subordinate houses, a number of bishops out of all proportion to any idea of dioceses. The only Welsh case where a number of bishops is mentioned, is the one of Llanddewibrefi, but that does not come anywhere near the Irish numbers; yet still these instances show that in all the Celtic countries the monastic family included among its members a certain number of bishops.

The fact of the number of bishops in the Irish monasteries brings out another very peculiar feature of the Celtic Church, namely, the groups of bishops, usually seven, that are found residing together in certain places. The *Martyrology of Donegal* mentions six groups of seven bishops. The *Litany of Œngus the Culdee*, however, mentions no less than one hundred and forty-one of such groups. It is by no means clear what these groups were; it appears that the members of the groups were usually related, brothers or cousins; no satisfactory account of them has as yet been given. Allusion to the mystical number seven, or to the Apocalypse, does not give any real help; all that can be said is, that it was one of the peculiar institutions of the Celtic Church. Dr. Todd supposes they were intended to be the centres of devotion to the surrounding tribes, and also located at places where the offices of the Church were celebrated with peculiar pomp and solemnity, kept up day and night without intermission. This explanation is far from satisfactory. It would seem more probable that, as there were groups of churches, and that each church had its officials, including bishops, so the group of seven churches would have seven bishops. This, however, does not really help, it only suggests the question in another form: Why were there seven churches? All that can be said is, that at present we do not know enough of Celtic Church organization to give a satisfactory answer.

The matter is not without its importance as an explanation of one of the controverted passages in the history of the Welsh Celtic Church, one that has attracted more notice, and has had more unsatisfactory explanations given to it than any other—the list of bishop's houses, first given in the *Dimetian Code*.[1] It states that there are seven bishop's houses in Dyfed, and then follow the names of seven places that are obviously monastic houses of some kind. If, as is usually said to be the case, they are a group of seven houses in the west corner of Pembrokeshire, it is no unreasonable explanation that they are an instance of one of the groups of seven bishops that occur in Ireland; if, on the other hand, they are admitted to be further apart, it is probable that they are a list of the monasteries to which bishops were attached. The usual explanations of these houses are curious. Jones and Freeman state,[2] "The episcopal houses, whatever may have been their exact nature, were conventual establishments of some kind or other, standing in a direct relation of subordination to the bishops." Bevan says,[3] "The earliest area of the diocese as a diocesan see was the principality of Dyfed, the present Pembrokeshire, with the adjacent parts of Carmarthenshire. In corroboration of the view as to the extent, we may cite the notice of the seven bishop's houses, as given in the Laws of Hywel Da, which all fall within the area above given." It is obvious that the above explanations are really no explanations at all; that they do not in any way account for the seven bishop's houses. That they were the same as the Irish groups of bishops seems far more likely, and gives some explanation of the number of houses. Newell says,[4] "Whatever may be the exact signification of this section,

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 556. [2] *History of St. David's*, p. 265.
[3] *Diocesan History*, p. 30. [4] *History of the Welsh Church*, p. 60.

which is not quite clear, this much is certain, that the heads of the bishop's houses were abbots, and it is not improbable that, originally, at least, they were abbot bishops." Two other instances in Wales can be mentioned. The authority of the *Iolo MSS.* is not of a high order, but it states that at Llantwit Vawr "Illtyd founded seven churches, appointed seven companies for each church, and seven halls or colleges in each company, and seven saints in each hall or college."[1] If any reliance whatever can be placed on this legend, which is very doubtful, it points to the group of seven like that met with in the Irish Celtic Church. Another instance is found in Bede's account of Bangor Iscoed, speaking of divisions into seven,[2] "In septem portiones esset cum præpositis sibi rectoribus monasterium divisum nulla harum portio minus quam trecentos homines haberet." Who the governor over each portion was is not clear, but it would seem that here again the same idea prevailed as in the Irish Celtic Church of the number seven and the groups of seven establishments.

Some writers, while unable to explain all the difficulties as to Welsh bishops from a Latin source, and who are not prepared to admit that monastic bishops in the Celtic sense prevailed in Wales, try to account for the admitted difficulties in two ways—(1) by saying the number of bishops is to be accounted for by each bishop having a number of suffragans (*chorepiscopi*). This view, which is ingenious, is open to the objection that suffragans imply, if not a diocese, a territorial jurisdiction; that suffragan bishops are almost always bishops of some city. But the difficulty is, that dioceses did not exist, and that there were no cities in Wales to have bishops. This is another instance of the hopelessness of trying to explain

[1] *Iolo MSS.*, p. 535. [2] *Hist. Eccl.*, ii, 2.

Celtic peculiarities by reference to the Latin Church customs and usages. The other idea is, that the bishops were non-diocesan bishops, neither monastic nor diocesan, but simply bishops. That is, in effect, giving to Wales a peculiar class of bishops of her own. The Latin Church recognized diocesan bishops, the Celtic monastic, but neither of them recognized an order of bishops "in gross", as a lawyer would say, who were neither diocesan nor monastic.

The question as to what were the precise duties of the Celtic bishop in the monastery, is also one on which there is not much light. In religious matters they were entitled to a certain deference, as appears from a story told by Adamnan, of a stranger (*proselytus*), Cronan, coming to Iona,[1] who endeavoured to conceal the fact that he was a bishop. Columba invited him to assist on Sunday in the celebration of the Eucharist, as if he had been a priest. It seems to have been usual at Iona for two priests to act as celebrants. On going up to the altar, Columba suddenly ascertained that the stranger was a bishop, and, addressing him as brother—not father—told him that he should celebrate alone with the episcopal rite, now it was known he was a bishop. It seems to have been the Celtic custom for the bishop to celebrate alone, unless another bishop was present, while in the Latin Church the rule is, that when a bishop celebrates, the priests who are present unite with the bishop in the consecration and manual acts. This shows that Columba, supreme as he was in his own monastery, in any ecclesiastical function gave place to the bishop. Here he is made to ask the bishop why he concealed his rank, so that he did not receive the respect (*veneratio*) due to him. From another passage in the *Life of Columba*, it appears that the bishop cele-

[1] *Vit. Columbæ*, i, c. 44.

brated alone. When Columba was a young man with Finnian, of Moville, there was not sufficient wine for the eucharist, the bishop was alone celebrating, and Columba turned water into wine to supply the want.[1] Another story, told by Adamnan,[2] shows that the bishops had but a limited discretion in exercising their spiritual functions. An Irish presbyter, Findchan, founded a monastery; he brought with him a man, Aidus Niger, who was certainly a fit subject for conversion, as he is described as an habitual murderer. After doing his penance, Findchan sent for a bishop to have Aidus ordained priest. The bishop objected, but said if he did it Findchan must assist, and place his hand on Aidus' head. This was done, and Aidus became transformed into a priest. Columba was furious when he heard this, and declared that Findchan's right hand, which, contrary to right and the law ecclesiastical, he had placed on Aidus' head, should rot off, and that Aidus should return like a dog to his vomit, and murder himself. Here, obviously, the monastic bishop was desirous of refusing ordination, but he did not dare to disobey his monastic superior; all he required was that it should be made clear that he acted under orders. Columba, although punishing the abbot and the priest, did nothing to the bishop, who, it would seem, was only acting in accordance with his duty in obeying his abbot. It would, therefore, appear to follow that the monastic bishops, in the actual performance of their episcopal duties were supreme, but if ordered by the abbots to perform them, they had to obey.

As has been already said, the episcopal functions of the Celtic bishop were limited to those that may be called personal, such as ordination and the like. He possessed no right of jurisdiction over the clergy; that right, as the

[1] *Vit. Columbæ*, ii, c. 1. [2] *Ibid.*, i, c. 36.

clergy were members of the monastery, belonged to the abbot, whose duty it was to keep up discipline. He was the head of the monastic family, not only of the mother house, but also of the daughter houses, and he exercised the jurisdiction over these houses and their possessions. Such a jurisdiction was abbatical, not episcopal. Little therefore remained for the bishop to do but to confer orders. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that the bishop is found uniting other offices with his episcopal duties.

It must also be remembered that many of the bishops were married. This is clear from many statements, one especially, that when Patrick wanted a bishop for the men of Leinster, one of the qualifications sought for was, that he should be a man of one wife.[1] The Irish laws draw the distinction between the married bishop, the virgin bishop, and the bishop of one wife. The *honor fine* of the virgin bishop was greater than that of the bishop of one wife.[2] The practice of bishops marrying was recognized in Wales until a much later date. It will be remembered that Bishop Sulien was married, and his sons almost claimed a right of succession to the see of St. David's. But the most striking example is to be found in an entry in the *Black Book of St. David's*, an Extent of the property of the see in the time of Edward II, 1326. Speaking of certain lands in Letterstone, the following entry occurs; "Item dicunt quod quidam episcopus Menevensis nomine David quondam dedit vii carucas terræ in plano et in bosco cum quadam filia sua prout a senioribus et fide dignis audierunt et vocatur terra illa Drym. Et fuerat quondam illa terra de dominico domini episcopi."[3]

The history of episcopacy in the Celtic Church starts

[1] *Tripartite Life*, Rolls ed., i, 189.

[2] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i, 57 : iv, 365.

[3] *British Museum, Add. MSS.*, 34,135, p. 24.

from the time when the bishop was merely the monastic official, as in the case of Findchan's monastery, bound to obey his abbot, and traces the development of the bishop into a prelate with a territorial jurisdiction—a peer of the realm, with the same power in ecclesiastical matters as the civil ruler had in temporal. Unfortunately the details of this transformation are not so full or complete as could be wished. The first step, from the subordinate official to the abbacy, had probably been brought about in the period between the time of Patrick and the date of the earliest Welsh records. It is admitted, even by Haddan and Stubbs, that in the earliest records we get of the Welsh Church, we find bishops, not diocesan, presiding over monastic or educational institutions,[1] who are perhaps faintly traceable about the sixth century; and that the idea of an honorary episcopate was not unfamiliar to Welshmen of the eleventh century.[2] This would mark the second stage, the abbatical jurisdiction exercised by the abbot, who was also bishop, first over the monastery, its daughter houses, and its possessions, and then gradually extending until it coincided with the civil limits of jurisdiction in which the monastery and its possessions were situate, thus gradually approximating the idea of a diocese; the last step being the extinction of the Welsh bishops and the formal appointment of Normans, who settled the limits of the Welsh sees and turned the remains of the Celtic monastic episcopacy into the Latin diocesan, which has continued since. In Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the dates of the changes differ, but the main features of the process seem the same in each.

From the *Senchus Mor* the position of the abbot as the head of the monastic property is clear. One of the five contracts which were dissolved, even if they were perfected,

[1] i, 142. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 143.

was the contract of a monk without his abbot,[1] that is, the gloss explains, the contract of a monk as a lay tenant of ecclesiastical lands without his abbot being present, provided the abbot impugns the contract. Speaking of services each person was bound to render, it is said that each man owes service to his own tribe chief, to his prince, and his abbot.[2] These entries show that at the time of this part of the *Senchus Mor* the abbot, not the bishop, was the head of the monastery, the chief of the ecclesiastical tribe. That the bishop was rising in importance is seen from the fact that his value was going up. The *dire fine* for a king and a bishop became equal.[3] This is explained by the gloss that the *honor fine* of the king of the territories and the bishop of the church of a king of territories is equal;[4] thus making it, not so much a question of the bishop personally, but because he was the bishop of the king's church. In the common caldron, which was kept always ready in the Irish chieftain's house, the joints in it were apportioned according to rank. His own proper kind of food was taken out of it for each person, the haunch for the king, bishop, and literary doctor.[5] The king's property could not be directly distrained upon, neither could a chief priest's,[6] a term that would apply equally to bishop or abbot, and which was at last applied to the bishop.

In the "Crith Gabhlach",[7] one of the later tracts in the *Senchus Mor*, the change in the position of the bishop is clearly brought out, and he was, at the time that tract was compiled, of an equal, if not superior rank to the king. It speaks of the retinue of a bishop when he travels for the good of Church and territory, and asks

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., i, 51, 53. [2] *Ibid.*, iii, 23.
[3] *Ibid.*, i, 41. [4] *Ibid.*, i, 43. [5] *Ibid.*, i, 49. [6] *Ibid.*, ii, 121.
[7] *Ibid.*, iv, 339.

"Which is higher, a king or a bishop? The bishop is higher, because the king stands up to salute him by reason of religion. A bishop, however, raises his knee to a king."[1] "What is the highest dignity on earth?[2] The dignity of the Church. What is the highest dignity which is in the Church? The dignity of a bishop. . . . And in Erin what is the highest *dire fine* there? The *dire fine* of a virgin bishop, with his full attributes, such as he is entitled to." It will be thus seen that the tracts in the *Senchus Mor* cover the period of time from when the bishop was under the rule of the abbot, until he became the great ecclesiastical personage. It was not until Ireland had passed from the Celtic to the Latin Church that the last passage was written. For there occurs in the sequel to the "Crith Gabhlach" this statement:[2] "The highest bishop of these is the bishop of Peter's church, because it is under his subjection the chiefs of Rome are, and they are not under the subjection of any one who has not virginity, or repentance, or lawful espousal, and it is to him that seven *cumhals* are payable for every degree of the seven orders that are upon him, if there be *eric fine* for him at all; if not *eric fine* there is to be the death of the person for the crime. Where is this to be found? It is in the tract which Augustine wrote upon the degrees of the church, and of the *dire fine*, and of their non-feedings and the particular law of the church of Peter, and the emperor of the whole world." It will be seen from this how complete was the triumph of Christianity; the *Senchus Mor* begins with the account of Patrick's trying to make death the punishment for murder, and failing miserably. It ends by laying down as law that death is the penalty, not for murder, but for assaulting a bishop.

From the Welsh laws very similar deductions can be

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., iv, 339. [2] *Ibid.*, 363.

made. They begin at a later date than the Irish, and the abbot, instead of being supreme, is found to be at least in an equal, if not superior position to the bishop; but, as time goes on, the bishop, as in Ireland, supplants the abbot.

That the church in Wales was monastic, not episcopal, is shown from the account of the two conferences that are said to have taken place between the heads of the Welsh Church and Augustine. The traditional list of those present at the first conference, about 601, is contained in the *Iolo MSS.*,[1] but it is quite apocryphal. Bede[2] merely says Augustine summoned to a conference "episcopos sive doctores maximæ et proximæ Britonum provinciæ"; the words are remarkable, as they seem to imply it was not merely bishops, or even bishops at all, who were summoned, but the heads of the British Church. The list gives seven bishops: 1, Hereford; 2, Llandaff; 3, Padarn; 4, Bangor; 5, St. Asaph; 6, Wig; 7, Morganwg; but it is obviously the guess of some Welsh antiquary of a much later date. That a Bishop's see existed at Hereford in 601 is opposed to all historical evidence—the Saxon see of Hereford having been carved out of Mercia, and not out of Wales. At this time the so-called bishop of Llandaff was Dubricius, who died 612[3]; but although we have tolerably copious lives of Dubricius and of his successor, Teilo, there is no mention of the so-called conference. At this time it is doubtful if there was a bishop of Padarn, as Cynog the bishop had become bishop of St. David's. Bangor is said to have been founded by Deniol, who died in 584,[4] but no record of any bishop at this time exists, and it is probable the bishop of Bangor is confounded with the abbot of Bangor

[1] 143, 548. [2] *Eccl. Hist.*, ii, 2.
[3] *Annales Cambriæ* and *Liber Landavensis*, p. 81, old ed.
[4] *Annales Cambriæ*.

Iscoed. The existence of St. Asaph as a bishopric at this date is most doubtful. It is true the alleged founder, St. Kentegern, was alive; he died 612;[1] but his connection with it, and placing Asa there on his return to Scotland, are monastic legends of the twelfth century. It is also most doubtful if any such see as Wig ever existed, and the same remark applies to Morganwg. The omission of St. David's is a very noteworthy point, and goes against the genuineness of the document, although Haddan and Stubbs ascribe it to the fact of David's death in 601. But there is another objection to it. Bede says distinctly that the assembly was of the bishops of the *nearest provinces*, "proximæ provinciæ", and that they requested it to be adjourned in order to secure the attendance of more of their number, "Unde postulabant ut secundo synodus pluribus advenientibus fieret";[2] and then he goes on to say that seven bishops attended, and many learned men, and especially the abbot of Bangor (*Bancornaburg*), Dinoth. From this it may fairly be said that the first assembly consisted of the persons from the immediate neighbourhood of the conference ("proximæ provinciæ"), that is, South Wales; that the assembly was adjourned to procure the attendance of others, and then only the North Wales people came; that, therefore, the names of North Wales dignitaries at the first conference is an invention of a later date, and that if at the second, the greater assembly, there were only seven bishops; therefore, it is not likely there were so many at the first, and so the list of the seven at the first is really what its compiler supposed ought to have been there, not what were there, assuming the meeting was held. It is also noteworthy that the only name that Bede gives, and which can be identified, is that, not of a bishop, but of an abbot, and he represents

[1] *Annales Cambriæ.* [2] *Hist. Eccl.*, ii, 2.

that abbot as taking the lead at the conference, and as being regarded as the head of the Celtic Church. If the view put forward, that the Celtic Church in Wales was monastic, and ruled by abbots not by bishops, is right, this is what would be expected to have happened. It is certainly difficult to account on any other ground for the supremacy that is here given to Dinoth, and that, in the alleged presence of his own diocesan (the bishop of St. Asaph), if he had one. Bede, read in the light of the customs of the Celtic Church, gives an intelligible account of the conferences, and states exactly what would have been expected to have happened. Bede and the Welsh mediæval antiquaries, who invented the list of bishops present, and the answer of Dinoth, only make the whole matter quite unintelligible. If, however, we reject the mediæval gloss, the account Bede gives is very strong evidence to show that the Celtic Church in Wales, as Augustine found it, was ruled by abbots, not by bishops.

There is, perhaps, no part of the subject of Celtic bishops as to which there is greater difference of opinion than as to what were the sees of the early bishops. Those writers, and they are nearly all the writers on the history of the early British Church, that hold that there could not have been a bishop without a see, are placed in great difficulty by the impossibility of finding localities for the dioceses of the different bishoprics. The next great difficulty is the bishopric, or, as some writers term it, the archbishopric of Caerleon on Usk. This is based on an adaptation of a passage in the *Codex Corbiensis* as to the names of the bishops present at the council of Arles in 314. Included in the names of the bishops there, among the bishops of Gaul, are the names of three British bishops, Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, and Adelfius, who is said to have been "episcopus de civitate

colonia Londinensium". Writers who have thought a Welsh bishop necessary for the sake of completeness have said, and it has become an accepted fact, that Londinensium means Legionensium, which they translate Caerleon on Usk. This statement depends on three assumptions, (1) that Londinensium is wrong, (2) that it means Legionensium, (3) that Legionensium means Caerleon. For none of these allegations is there even a tittle of evidence. It is quite possible that Londinensium is right; there is no authority for saying that Londinensium means Legionensium, nor that Legionensium means Caerleon. The passage of Bede[1]—speaking of Chester, calls it, "Civitas Legionum quem a gente Anglorum Legacestir a Britonibus autem rectius Carlegion appellatur,"—may be cited to show that Legionensium might just as well mean Chester as Caerleon, and some modern writers make out that Legionensium means Colchester, or Lincoln.[2] The other authority for the existence of the see is the alleged answer of Dinoth, that asserts that the Welsh were under the rule of the bishop of Caerleon. It is usually admitted the so-called answer is a mediæval forgery. Haddan and Stubbs treat the signatures of the bishops at the council of Arles as conclusively proving diocesan episcopacy in the British Church.[3] But, as one of the alleged dioceses is admitted by them to be conjectural, it can hardly be denied that the evidence is of a very unsatisfactory nature, and very slight to prove so much.

The alleged Welsh sees were eight in number, and are said to have corresponded to the different Welsh princi-

[1] *Hist. Eccl.*, ii, 2.

[2] See the article of Mr. Haverfield in the *English Historical Review* for July, 1896, where he shows that the description cannot be applied to Caerleon, and probably applies to Lincoln.

[3] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 142.

palities. (1.) Bangor for Venedotia, the principality of Gwynedd, said to have been founded by Deiniol, who died in 584. But the evidence of this see is most untrustworthy; the *Annales Cambriæ* simply say, "CXL, Annus dispositio, Danielis Bancorum," which might just as well refer to Bangor Iscoed and its abbot, as it does not mention even that Daniel was a bishop. Ricemarch's *Life of David*, an eleventh century production, it is said, confirms the view that Daniel was a bishop, but the only mention of Daniel in it is a passage where, at the synod of Llanddewibrefi, it was agreed to send for David, and on his refusing to come, after three sets of messengers had proved unsuccessful, "Tandem sanctissimi viri ac fidelissimi mittunt. fratres Deniol et Dubriticus".[1] This is all. There is nothing to show who Deniol was—nothing to show he was a bishop; even admitting that the legendary account of the Llanddewibrefi synod is the true one, which is doubtful, it is necessary to have something more than the name Daniel to prove that St. Deiniol founded the see of Bangor, and died in 584. The only other authority is the *Liber Llandavensis*. This compilation of the twelfth century, in proving the right of the bishop of Llandaff to Carmarthenshire, east of the Towy, did all its compilers could do to glorify the Llandaff bishops. In two passages it alludes to Daniel. The first is in the account of Elgar,[2] a holy hermit who was shipwrecked on the Isle of Bardsey, where he lived seven years. One day Caradog came to see him, and asked Elgar to relate to him the particulars of his life. Elgar agreed, and stated that holy spirits, day and night, ministered to him, and that, although separated from him, yet when he met them he knew them from his frequent interviews; they were, "Dubricius Archipræsulem Britanniæ, Danielem Ban-

[1] *Camb.-Brit. Saints*, 137. [2] P. 4, old ed.

gorensis ecclesiæ episcopum dextralis sanctumque Paternun et multos alios quorum corpora hac insula sepulta sunt".[1] As it is admitted that Dubricius was never archbishop of Western Britain, it is difficult to attach much weight to the allegation that Daniel was bishop of Bangor, and it is hardly worth while to discuss if any weight can be placed, for historical purposes, on the alleged description of the visions of a hermit, and the discourses of the spirits that appeared to him. If any weight is to be given to it, the fact that Daniel is called bishop, not of the diocese, but of "Bangorensis ecclesiæ" is worthy of notice. It would be a perfectly good translation to give of the religious house of Bangor. Rees says,[2] that Daniel assisted his father in founding Bangor Iscoed and afterwards founded a monastery of his own, Bangor Vawr, of which he was abbot; subsequently, Maelgwyn Gwynedd raised it to the rank of a bishop's see, of which Deiniol was the first bishop. We are not, however, told how a Welsh chief obtained power to make bishoprics, or on what authority this assertion is made. The other passage in the *Liber Llandavensis* occurs in the life of Dubricius;[3] observing the great number of persons who came to him, he divided the churches among his disciples; some he sent to churches which had been given him, for others he founded churches, and having constituted dioceses (*parochiæ*) he consecrated bishops, "per dextralem Britanniam . . . Danielem in episcopum in Bancorensi civitate et plures alios abbates et presbyteros cum inferioribus ordinibus Ildutum abbatem apud podum vocatum ab eodem Llanildut." How Dubricius, even if his archiepiscopal rights are admitted, had power to constitute dioceses in North Wales; why Daniel is the only bishop whose name is given; why the others were all abbots, it is hard to see. All that can be said is, that

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, p. 5. [2] *Welsh Saints*, 258. [3] *Liber Landavensis*, 68.

the passage is not sufficient evidence to show the existence of a territorial see of Bangor, still less that it was occupied by Daniel as its first bishop. It may well be that such a legend existed, but legends are not proofs. The existence of a diocese of Bangor before the arrival of Augustine, and the fact that Daniel was first bishop, are not proved by anything approaching to evidence, and the presumption is all the other way.

(2.) The next Welsh bishopric is Llanelwy, or St. Asaph, the bishopric for the province of Powys. Here the evidence of a territorial bishopric is, if possible, weaker than in the case of Bangor. The only authority for it being a twelfth century *Life of St. Kentegern*, who, it is said, on his return to Scotland left St. Asa there. The *Annales Cambriæ* say Kentegern died 612, but beyond this statement five hundred years after that year, there is no evidence of the existence of the see till the mention of a bishop in the laws of Hwyel Da. It may, therefore, be said that there is no evidence of any North Wales diocese before the conquest, and what little evidence of episcopacy there is, refers to monastic, not to diocesan bishops.

South Wales is said to have been divided into five sees, or, with the apocryphal Caerleon, into six.

(3.) St. David's (Menevia), although not the first in time, is the most important. This is said to have been for the principality of Dyfed (*Demetia*). It is alleged that St. David was the founder and first bishop of Menevia. But it would appear from Ricemarch's *Life* that this was not so. Speaking of David's baptism, he says,[1] "Deinde cum baptizaretur ad Belue Meneviensium episcopo in ipso loco," thus showing that a bishop existed at Menevia before St. David. It would also seem that there was a monastery there before David's, for we are

[1] *Camb.-Brit. Saints*, 121.

told in the same life[1] that David, on his return from his educational tour, found his relation, Bishop Guislianus, residing at a monastic establishment at Henfynw. One day, David said an angel had revealed to him that from that monastery barely one in a hundred would go to heaven, but there was a place near from which few would go to hell, for every one buried in the cemetery in faith would obtain mercy. They accordingly moved to the place where David built his monastery, Glyn Rosant. If it is correct that there was a monastic establishment with a bishop existing at Menevia before the time of David, and what he did was to found a larger monastery of which he was abbot, the difficulty that some writers have felt—why did David go to Menevia to found a bishopric? vanishes. He went to found a monastery, and the site selected was just such an one as a Celtic founder would take. Those who speak of David as a bishop must remember that the only account of his consecration is that given in the same *Life*, of his visit to Jerusalem and his consecration there as archbishop by the patriarch, are probably fiction. There is no evidence that David was ever consecrated a bishop. He was the head of the monastery of Menevia, and as such, a far greater man. Having already a bishop, Guislianus, at his monastery, it is very unlikely he would be made a bishop as well. The monastic character of Menevia continued until the ninth century. Asser, the great Menevian monk, in his *Life of Alfred*, says of the Pagans:[2] "Qui sæpe deprædabatur illud monasterium et parochiam sancti Degui aliquando expulsione illorum antistitum qui in eo præessent sicut et Novis archiepiscopum, propinquum meum et me expulit aliquando sub ipsis." It will be said that

[1] *Camb.-Brit. Saints*, p. 124.

[2] *De Alfredi rebus gestis*, ed. Camden, p. 15.

parochia here means diocese, but it is not clear if it means more than the district of the monastery. It seems clear that the Menevian establishment was, until a later date, one of Celtic type, with a bishop as one of its officials. There are no documents relating to the see before Rhyddmarch's *Life of St. David*, and it may well be that the reason is not that they were all destroyed by Danes and pirates, but that they never existed. That the monastery of St. David's was plundered again and again is clear; but that the see was plundered is very doubtful, there being no see to plunder.

(4.) The existence of the next see, Llanbadarn, near Aberystwth, is very hazy. Rees makes out a case for it, based on the dedication of churches; but the evidence is most unsatisfactory, even if it can be called evidence, the alleged fact that Cynog was, on David's death, translated to Menevia, and a passage in the *Brut y Tywysogion* being all the evidence for its existence. That there was a monastic establishment there is pretty clear, and it is quite probable one of its members was a bishop; but that he was a bishop ruling over a definite or an indefinite area has no evidence to support it. It is also curious to notice that after the conquest, the head of Llanbadarn is called, not bishop, but archpriest. The entry in the *Brut y Tywysogion*, under the year 1136, is: "In that year (1136) Jevan, archpriest (*archoffeirat*) of Llanbadarn, died."[1] An abbot might be called archpriest, but it is doubtful if such a term was ever applied to a bishop.

(5.) For the next see, Llanafan Vaur, there is even, if possible, less evidence than for Llanbadarn. On a stone at the church there is an inscription, "Hic Jacet Sanctus Avanvs Episcopus." This does not go for much; especially when it is remembered that it is an

[1] Rolls ed., p. 160.

inscription of about the fourteenth century,[1] it goes for less. There is nothing to show (1) when he was bishop, or (2) where he was bishop. Rees tries to make out the existence of the diocese from the dedication of churches, and signally fails to do so.

(6.) For the next see, Llandaff, said to have been the see for the province of Gwent, there is no lack in quantity of records. These records were avowedly collected in the twelfth century, during Urban's episcopate, as a means of justifying the course Urban took to defend his rights, or rather to enlarge the boundaries of his see. As to their trustworthiness, there may be very considerable doubts. The charters define far too well and too clearly the possessions of the see, and it is very doubtful if the greater part of them are not forgeries, made to prove the Llandaff claim to the Teilo churches. That there was a monastic establishment at Llandaff is clear—that the bishop was connected with it, either as abbot or otherwise, is also clear. The doubt is, if it had any jurisdiction over the places which were afterwards said to be in the diocese, whether its rights were not those of owner, not of a bishop of a diocese, exercising episcopal jurisdiction. Nothing further need be said here, except that the records of its possessions do not themselves show episcopal jurisdiction over the country where the possessions were situated. The records,[2] "are nothing better or worse than an uncritical compilation by interested and unhistorical compilers, who had no scruple, if a title deed was wanting, in composing one according to their own view of the facts."

In the list of bishops said to have been present at the conference with Augustine, two bishops are mentioned, those of Morganwg, as distinct from Llandaff, and that

[1] Westwood, *Lapidarium Walliæ*, 72. [2] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 147.

of Wig. Of neither of them is there any real evidence that they ever existed; but if Morganwg is, as some writers say, Margam, it is quite possible that a monastic establishment there, might have had a bishop of its own as part of that establishment. Wig is said to be the same as Weeg on the Wye, in Herefordshire—the same place as Henllan, where Dubricius' great monastery was placed. If this is so, there is nothing more likely than that there were bishops both at Margam and Henllan, but that they were part of the monastic family, not as it is tried to be made out, territorial lords exercising a territorial jurisdiction. It may, therefore, be safely concluded that there is nothing in the history of the Welsh sees that in any way conflicts against the idea of the early bishops being monastic officials; on the contrary, such a fact serves to explain a good deal of Welsh history that is otherwise obscure. When the various entries relating to the Welsh sees in different authors are looked at and compared, it will be seen that in the whole history of the early Celtic monasteries there is nothing inconsistent with the idea that the system in the Irish monasteries also prevailed in the Welsh; that in Wales, as in Ireland, territorial bishops were unknown; that in Wales, as in Ireland, there were no fixed dioceses, and consequently no jurisdiction by the bishop over the clergy and laity.

This is clearly the case up to the conference with Augustine in 601. After that date, in some cases, notably Llandaff, there does seem to have been a desire to change the character of the Celtic bishops, to make them more resemble territorial bishops, and less monastic officials than had been the case. Probably intercourse with England and with the Saxons may have led the Welsh bishops to try to place themselves in the superior position the Anglo-Saxon bishops held. In the *Liber*

Landavensis, from the earlier part of the seventh century, the bishops of Llandaff are represented as acting in a way that would only be consistent with bishops having territorial authority. They are represented as excommunicating the Welsh princes. Oudoceus is said to have held a synod, called his three abbots, Cyngen, abbot of Vale Carvan, Catgen, abbot of Illtyd, and Sulien, abbot of Docunni (it will be seen he called no bishops), and excommunicated Meuric on account of murder, and debarred the country from baptism and Christian communion. The king and country remained for two years and more under the ban of excommunication. The curse was only taken off on Meurig giving four villages to the church of Llandaff.[1] This document assumes two things: (1) Oudoceus's episcopal authority over Meurig's kingdom (Glamorgan), a very doubtful point; and (2), his authority over the great abbey, Llaniltyd, a still more doubtful point, as Celtic bishops had no authority over Celtic monasteries. It is also suspicious that the only record of these proceedings should occur in a compilation where the church of Llandaff was seeking to prove its title to certain lands. The compiler wanted to assert some reason for the grant, and the kings having already done enough for their own souls and those of their progenitors, he had to find out something else—hence the excommunication of Meurig. But Meurig was not the only one of the Glamorgan chiefs over whom the bishop of Llandaff exercised jurisdiction; Morgan,[2] another of them, also committed murder. Another synod was called, and he was put to penance, and had to release the monasteries of Llancarvan, Llaniltyd, and Docunni, from all royal services. Soon after, similar proceedings were taken against Gwidnerth.[3] A synod was held, and a three years' excommunication pronounced,

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, 139. [2] *Ibid.*, 143. [3] *Ibid.*, 172.

and, as part of his penance, he was sent to Dol in Brittany. On his return, after further penance, he made a grant to the church of Llandaff, and obtained absolution from Berthgwyn. It should be noted that one object of the compiler of the *Liber Landavensis* was obviously to prove the exercise of jurisdiction by the see of Llandaff over the territory disputed with St. David's, and he is careful in each case to state that the persons who attended the synods came from the country between the mouth of Taratyr on Wye and the mouth of Towy, that is, the whole country claimed by Bishop Urban. This fact alone causes the genuineness of the alleged proceedings to be doubtful. Bishop Gwrwan went through a like process with Tewdur, king of Dyfed, for murder,[1] only here no synod was called, whether because it was without the diocese or not, it is impossible to say. The excommunication was done by the bishop and his clergy alone, and the pardon was granted on the gift of lands to the church of Llandaff. Bishop Berthgwyn also excommunicated Clydri[2] for murder; the usual synod was held, and the pardon granted on the usual terms. Gurwan, king of Archenfield, was accused of incest with his stepmother;[3] in this case there was also synod, pardon, and grant of lands.

If these transactions really took place, they would go a long way to establish territorial episcopacy, except that the excommunication of a prince in what is admitted to have been the diocese of St. David's (Dyfed) by the bishop of Llandaff is peculiar. But, as already pointed out, the *Liber Landavensis* is a twelfth century compilation,[4] and the documents are not contemporary records. Very little weight is, therefore, to be given to them.

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, 158. [2] *Ibid.*, 168. [3] *Ibid.*, 180.
[4] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 147.

Not content with these alleged excommunications, the *Liber Landavensis* claims for the bishop a gradually increasing jurisdiction.[1] A synod was held to receive a grant of Llan Helicon. This synod consisted of the clergy *totius parochiæ*; here using for the first time a term that, at the date of the compilation of the *Liber*, meant diocese in the modern sense, and defining its limits from the mouths of Taratyr on Wye to Towy. Bishop Cerenhir[2] held similar synods *totius parochiæ*, to excommunicate Howel for murder and Ili for murder. Another synod was held by Bishop Cyfeiliawg,[3] as to the boundaries of the lands of the church of Llandaff and those of Brochwael, which ended in Brochwael granting the disputed lands to the church and the bishops of Llandaff for ever. Another synod by the same bishop,[4] of all his clergy, even of the minor orders, *ad inferiores gradus*, was held to judge of wrongs done by Brochwael and his family to the bishop and his family (*familiam Civelliauc episcopi*), the expression is noteworthy, when Brochwael was sentenced to give to the bishop a plate (*prætium*) of pure gold of the length and width of the bishop's face, and make amends to the bishop's family.[5] Brochwael would not consent to this, but compounded by granting to the church various lands. Bishop Libiau (927–929) carried the excommunications farther than any of the others had done. Tewdur, king of Brecon,[6] drove him out of the monastery of Llancors, and took away his dinner. Libiau thereupon went to Llandaff with all his family, held a synod, and excommunicated Tewdur. A very heavy fine was placed on him by Libiau before he would pardon him. As Tewdur could not pay, he got Lumbert, bishop of St. David's, to arrange matters, and, as usual, things

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, 196. [2] *Ibid.*, 202. [3] *Ibid.*, 221. [4] *Ibid.*, 223.
[5] See *Dimetian Code*, i, 346. [6] *Liber Landavensis*, 227.

were settled on a grant being made to the bishop of Llandaff. It is to be observed that Lumbert seems to have been called in as a common friend, not as having any authority to intervene in the dispute, although it is quite possible that Lancors was in his diocese, not in Llandaff. In the charter that Tewdur gave, granting the lands, as it appears in the *Liber Landavensis*, the witnesses are said to be (1) Libiau, and (2) Lumbert.

Other synods are recorded in the *Liber Landavensis*, down to about 1090. Bishop Gulfrid excommunicated Llywerth, son of Cadwgan, king of Glamorgan, for wasting church land.[1] Bishop Pater twice excommunicated Nowi, king of Gwent, first for murder in a house belonging to the church;[2] secondly, for murdering a deacon before the altar of the monastic church of St. Harmon and St. Febric.[3] Bishop Gulfrid excommunicated Llywarch for taking Eicolf a prisoner on the abbey lands.[4] Bledri excommunicated Edwyn, king of Gwent, because one of his men wounded the bishop.[5] All were pardoned on making the usual gifts of land. Bishop Joseph twice excommunicated Meurig, son of Hywel, king of Glamorgan, first for murdering Edwyn, son of Guriad, king of Gwent,[6] and, secondly, for violating sanctuary at Llandaff, and carrying off the wife of one Seissill.[7] Here, also, the excommunication was taken off on a grant of land being made to the church. Herwald, the last Celtic bishop of Llandaff (1056–1104), excommunicated Cadwgan, son of Meurig, king of Glamorgan, for getting drunk on Christmas day, when on a visit to Llandaff, and killing the bishop's grandson, Berthutis.[8] The matter was arranged by Meurig making a grant of lands to Herwald, and all the bishops of Llandaff. The synod here was

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, 212. [2] *Ibid.*, 208. [3] *Ibid.*, 209.
[4] *Ibid.*, 212. [5] *Ibid.*, 239. [6] *Ibid.*, 245. [7] *Ibid.*, 248. [8] *Ibid.*, 255.

called "per omnes ecclesias totius suæ *diocesecos*",[1] the first time in which the word is found in the charters.

These excommunications, although most of them are of very doubtful genuineness, are of considerable interest, as showing the steps in the change from the Celtic to the Norman bishop. Beginning with Oudoceus, who is said to have been bishop in the sixth century, they terminate with Herwald the last Celtic bishop. The first thing to be noticed is, how the territorial claim became formulated. In the first, the synod consisted of "Omnes clericos suos ab ostio Taratyr yn Gwy usque ad Tywi cum tribis abbatibus suis Concen abbate Carbani vallis, Catgen abbatis Ilduti, Sulgen abbate Docguinni".[2] In the second, "Mandavit episcopus Oudoceus propter abbates trium congregationum suarum Concen abbatem Catoci, Sulgen abbatem Docunni, Congen abbatem Ilduti, cum suis clericis congregatis in unum in sancta sinodo omnibus ab ostio Taratyr yg Gwy usque ad ostium Tywi".[3] Of the third synod it is only said to be,[4] "Congregata ab ostio Gwy usque ad ostium Tywi". These three synods are all those of Oudoceus. Bishop Gurwan's synod, the fourth, was "Episcopus Gutuan cum clericis suis".[5] So far there has been no mention of any district except in the most general terms, but the fifth synod is said to have been, "Ad sacram sinodum Landaviæ omnes clericos totius *parochiæ* ab ostio Taratyr super Gwy usque ad ripam Tywi".[6] Bishop Berthgwyn, who called the sixth,[7] held a full synod at Llandaff, "Congregata in unum ab ostio Taratyr usque ad ostiam Tywi". Bishop Trichan, who held the seventh, is said,[8] "Congregatp tribus abbatibus et attestantibus in unum et omnibus clericis totius parochiæ ab osteo Taratyr super ripam Gwy usque ad ostium Tywi".

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, 256. [2] *Ibid.*, 139. [3] *Ibid.*, 144.
[4] *Ibid.*, 172. [5] *Ibid.*, 158. [6] *Ibid.*, 168. [7] *Ibid.*, 180. [8] *Ibid.*, 196.

Bishop Cerenhir, who held the eighth, called[1] a synod at Llandaff, "Congregatis in unum clericis totius parochiæ ab osteo Taratyr in gwi usque ad ostium Tywi". The ninth was,[2] Totum clerum totius parochiæ infra Taratyr super ripam Gwy et ostium Tywi". Bishop Cyveiliauc, who called the tenth,[3] called it, "Congregates omnibus clericis et omnibus sapientibus qui erant a Tywi usque Guy", and the eleventh,[4] "Omnes clericos usque ad inferiores gradus per totam parochiam intra ostium Taratyr in Gwy usque ad ostium Tywi". Bishop Libiaw called the twelfth,[5] "Congregatis omnibus clericis totius parochiæ intra ostium Taratyr in Gwy et ostium Tywi positæ". The thirteenth synod was called by Bishop Gulfrid to excommunicate Llywarch, son of Cadwgan, king of Glamorgan, for wasting church lands. He summoned, "Clericos ecclesiastici ordinis de omni parochia infra ostium Taratyr supra ripam Gwy et ripam Tywi apud Lannoudochui".[6] Bishop Pater summoned the next,[7] the fourteenth, "Clericos totius parochiæ inter Taratyr et Tywi," to excommunicate Novis, king of Gwent for violating sanctuary, and the fifteenth, also to deal with Novis,[8] for murdering a deacon before the altar. Pater sent "ad monasteria omnium provinciarum totius parochiæ infra ostium Taratyr ig Gwy usque ad ripam Tuigwi quarum obedientiæ subjectæ sunt ecclesiæ Landaviæ et sanctis, ejusdem Dubricii, Teliaui, Oudocei et Patri episcopo et omnibus episcopis succedentibus in perpetuo ut congregarentur sacerdotes diaconi et omnes gradus ecclesiastici et in unum convenierunt". The sixteenth,[9] Bishop Gwgan excommunicated Arthmail, king of Gwent, for killing his brother Elised, and sent "per totam parochiam sibi subditam et obtemperantem

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, 203. [2] *Ibid.*, 205. [3] *Ibid.*, 221.
[4] *Ibid.*, 223. [5] *Ibid.*, 228. [6] *Ibid.*, 212. [7] *Ibid.*, 208.
[8] *Ibid.*, 209. [9] *Ibid.*, 216. [10] *Ibid.*, 233.

ecclesiæ suæ Llandaviæ propter clericos omnes de majoribus gradus usque ad inferiores gradus". Bishop Bledri held the seventeenth, to excommunicate Edwin, king of Gwent, for wounding one of the bishop's servants, and summoned[1] "per omnes ecclesias totius parochiæ infra ostium Taratyr super ripam Gwy et ostium Tywi positæ et adunatis omnibus clericis sacri ordinis". The last, the eighteenth, was held by Herewald, to excommunicate Catgun, son of Meurig, for killing the bishop's grandson. The synod was summoned[2] "per omnes ecclesias totius suæ dioceseos obtemperantes sibi intra ostium Taratyr super ripam Gwy et ripam Tywi". From these entries as to the different synods from about the beginning of the seventh to the middle of the eleventh century, some four hundred years, it will be seen how the territorial idea rose up; first, it was to summon the clergy between two fixed points, then all the clergy of the *parochiæ*, lastly, all the clergy of the diocese.

The history of the present Welsh sees furnishes no evidence against the existence of monastic bishops who gradually became diocesan. Latin writers, who are ready enough to admit that the abbot and the bishop were at one time the same personage, that the abbot could become a bishop, are unable to go a step further and admit that the bishop was ever a subordinate member of the monastery. Even the fact that this was so in Ireland, Scotland, and on the continent, does not enable them to get over the idea that a bishop must be head of the ecclesiastics in a defined area. As has been shown, that was not the Celtic idea, and when dealing with the Celtic Church it is as well to try and explain matters on Celtic principles.

The whole history of the Welsh Church, after the coming of Augustine, is the account of how the bishop

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, 239. [2] *Ibid.*, 256.

grew in importance, from a subordinate position in the monastery, until he became the head of the clergy in the diocese, and exercised jurisdiction over them and it. The Llandaff records bring this out very clearly, and, whether genuine or not, they are the best account we have of the depreciation of the abbot and the appreciation of the bishop. In this part of the case, what evidence there is, goes to show that the episcopal system in Wales was like that in Ireland — bishops belonging to monasteries, and under the orders of the abbot. Then came the evolutionary process whereby the bishop gradually became the equal, and afterwards the superior of the abbot. It is a most interesting piece of ecclesiastical history, showing how local ideas and surroundings modify even the beliefs and opinions of men in ecclesiastical affairs, how the bishop became first, abbot, then, having the control of the monastery and the possessions of the monastery, added to it that of the surrounding districts; and when he obtained this became a "lord bishop", exercising civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction over a defined area.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CLERGY.

It is not an uninteresting fact, that among the details that have come down to us of the Celtic Church, the most scanty are those relating to the clergy. There is a certain amount of information as to saints, monasteries, and bishops, but as to "the inferior clergy, the priests and the deacons"—the men who had to carry on the daily work of the church, who were not born to the position of saints, whose lives were spent in "the trivial round, the daily task" of the ordinary clergyman, our information is most meagre. This may probably be accounted for on two grounds, first, the monastic character of the Celtic clergy; they were mostly monks, or, if not actually monks, at least connected with monasteries. It is probable that the rules of the monasteries as to monks were the rules which regulated the clergy. So the history of their lives and doings was, to a great extent, merged in the history of the particular monastery to which they belonged. This forms one of the great points of divergence between the Latin and Celtic organizations. The Celtic monks were mostly in orders; the Latin monks were to a considerable, if not a great extent, bodies, not of ecclesiastics, but of laymen. Thus the history of Celtic and Latin monks is, of necessity, very different. The second reason for the existing lack of details probably arises from the fact that during the time the Celtic Church retained her independence, her clergy were not

a parochial clergy in our sense of the word. The idea of the whole country being divided into ecclesiastical divisions, each under the charge of some ecclesiastical official appointed by an officer who had supreme ecclesiastical control over the district, responsible to that officer, and to him alone, formed no part of the system of the Celtic Church. "It required," says Mr. Skene,[1] "a different organization to establish the Christian Church on a firm and permanent basis among the Celts, and to leaven the whole people with its doctrine and rules of life; the introduction of the monastic element and its application to the entire organization of the Church effected what a Church with its secular clergy had failed to do." Bearing these reasons in mind, it is possible, by considering various points connected with the Latin Church, and comparing them with such information as we possess about the Celtic monks and clergy, to obtain some idea of those men who, in spite of many faults and numerous failings, were yet able to send out that crowd of Christian missionaries who poured forth as an inundation[2] to convert Burgundy and Gaul to the faith, and for a time contended with Rome for the control of the Western Churches.

The ideas that prevailed in the two Churches, the Latin and the Celtic, as to the best way to evangelize a country, were essentially different. The Latin Church believed in the preaching and personal teaching of the individual. The Latin missionary preached the Gospel, he explained the benefits he alleged were to be derived from a life of holiness. The Celtic Church proceeded by other means. It established a group of clergy; they did not

[1] *Celtic Scotland*, ii, 40.

[2] "Quasi inundatione facta, illa se sanctorum examina effuderunt."—*Vita S. Malachi*, St. Barnard, c. vi.

preach against the vice, the superstition, the idolatry which prevailed around them, but they obtained from the tribe the right to settle on the tribal land, and there formed a colony, and proceeded to show, or to try to show, by their lives and conduct, what Christianity could accomplish. Abandoning all that made existence pleasant, they gave an illustration of the height of holiness to which a life of piety, devotion, and self-denial would enable men to attain. They gave an object lesson of the results which could really be produced; they did not merely make promises of what it was possible to produce. This spectacle took hold of the Celtic mind far more than any assertion of possibilities of holiness. The Celt saw and believed. The sight of the Christian colonies, the lives of the monks, acted on the feelings of the people in a manner that nothing else could do; more than any spoken eloquence, more than any dogmatic teaching, they brought home to them the perfect beauty of holiness, the supreme majesty of self-denial and suffering. As soon as he was ordained, a Celt became a member of some monastery. Thus, on Brendan being ordained priest, his first act was to receive with the priesthood the monastic habit, "accepitque sanctus Brendanus cum esset sacerdos habitum monasticum sanctum".[1] This connection between the clergy and monasteries had a very important bearing on the organization of the Celtic Church, and the class from which its clergy was drawn. It appears to have been a rule in the Latin Church, as it is still in the Anglican,[2] that no one was to be ordained unless he had a title, sufficient to provide the necessaries of life. If a bishop dispensed with this provision, and ordained a man who had no means of livelihood, the bishop was bound to support him. This was provided by a decree of the

[1] *Acta Brendani*, p. 16. [2] 33rd Canon of 1603.

Lateran Council, in 1179, which prescribed: "Episcopus si aliquem sine certo titulo de quo necessaria vitæ percipiat in Diaconum vel Presbyterum ordinaverit tamdiu necessaria ei subministret donec in aliqua ei ecclesia convenientia—stipendia militiæ clericalis assignet nisi forte talis—qui ordinatur extiterit qui de sua vel paterna hæreditate subsidium vitæ possit habere." The result of this was that a Latin bishop would be very careful before he ordained a man who had no means of support, lest he should be saddled with his maintenance. In the registers of the mediæval bishops, when an ordination is recorded, not merely are the names of those ordained given at length, but also the title upon which they were ordained, so as to give proof, should it ever be required, that at the time of ordination the person receiving orders had visible means of livelihood. A very common entry, on such ordinations, is "on a title by patrimony", meaning that the person had inherited, or had acquired, a sufficiency to maintain himself. In some cases the amount of the title is given, such as, "A title of four marks". This was almost the lowest title in amount; after many of the names is inserted a statement that the candidate considered the amount named sufficient ("de quo reputat se contentum").

It will thus be seen that gradually the Latin clergy became a body of men of independent means. If a person was ordained to any church benefice, that seems to have been considered sufficient provision. This rule has been observed in the Anglican Church; the thirty-third canon of those of 160$\frac{3}{4}$ gives the seven titles on which ordination is permissible in that church. In Ayliffe's *Paragon juris canonici Anglicani* an additional case is given. "A person may be promoted to orders without any certain title if he has a sufficient patrimony to live on and to

maintain himself, and such a person is said to be ordained *in titulum sui patrimonii*, nay, if he has a sufficient estate to subsist on he may be ordained, though his estate be not expressly assigned and given *in modum tituli*." There was another exception: it was always held a sufficient title for orders, to be a member of a monastic body, as that body was bound to support its members. In the old ordination lists there frequently appears the entry of a person belonging to a particular religious house or order, without anything more; usually the monastic candidates appear in a group by themselves, but they are very few in number compared with the other persons ordained. This marks one great distinction between the Celtic and the Latin clergy. Except the Latin candidate was a monk, or held a benefice, he must have been possessed of sufficient means to maintain himself. Not so the Celt. He was a member of the tribe of the Saint, entitled to be maintained by the tribe, and so entitled to orders. Thus, the Latin clergy were to some extent selected men, and no one in that Church could claim a right to be ordained, as of course. But the Celt, when once he was admitted to the tribe of the Saint, was entitled, as part of his tribal rights, to orders if he liked to claim them. All the tribe of the Saint—all members of the Celtic monastery—were entitled to orders. This right, resulting from the tribal idea, must have greatly limited the bishop's power. In the Latin Church each order was a privilege only conferred on a selected few; in the Celtic Church orders were a right, any person who belonged to a particular family or tribe could claim, if he liked. It may well be that this right to orders, as a part of the tribal privileges, may have led to the number of Celtic bishops; each tribe having the right to give its tribesmen orders, each tribe would have had, among its officers, a person who could

confer such rights. This distinction marks the first great difference between the Celtic and Latin clergy, the divergent ideas as to the power to obtain orders—personal selection of the fittest; or tribal rights. It may be said that the tribe of the Saint would see that only proper persons were admitted to the tribe. It is, however, not clear that they had any right to refuse admittance, except in certain cases. Usually, persons who came within the rules were entitled to be admitted, and so to have orders. Probably this is a survival of Pagan times, when the office of priest, or Druid, was hereditary in certain families; all the members of the family had the right to exercise sacerdotal functions until the Divine displeasure was shown by some outward and visible sign, such as the blotches on the face in the case of the Irish Druids.[1] This right to receive orders, independent of any special fitness for the post, may, in some way, account for what appears to have been the very loose way in which orders were conferred in the Celtic Church. As the members of the tribe of the Saint had a right to ordination because they were members, it almost follows that ordination would become a mere ceremony and nothing more. It is thus easy to understand why it was that the Latins so looked down on the Celtic clergy and assumed such an air of superiority over them. The Latin priest considered that his orders were the reward of merit—personal merit shown from his selection by the bishop—not a mere right which implied nothing meritorious, but was merely the consequence of the accident of birth or position. The fact that all the members of the tribe were entitled to orders, furnishes the explanation of another difference between the Latin and Celtic clergy. The Latin Church refused to ordain persons of illegitimate birth, unless a proper dis-

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, i, 25.

pensation was given. Such a dispensation for the higher orders of bishop, priest, or deacon, could only be granted by the Pope, or the Pope's legate, as his representative. For minor orders a bishop was authorised to give it. Whatever may have been the case in early times, in mediæval times dispensations were numerous, and frequent examples may be found in the registers of the English bishops; for instance, in the Durham register,[1] in 1340, there is one in respect of William Ferour, who, after inquiry, was certified not to be "an imitator of the paternal incontinence", and in spite of his defect of birth was allowed to receive all orders, and hold an ecclesiastical benefice with the cure of souls. In the Celtic Church this question could not arise, as legitimacy was not a necessity to entitle a person to tribal rights; and as the tribe of the Saint in its organization followed the tribe of the land, it was but required for a person to become a member of the tribe of the Saint, and, when he was once a member, orders followed as of course. To the Celt, the question of the birth before or after marriage, or even without marriage, was of but slight importance; it was the fact, not the date of paternity, that they regarded; indeed, among the Welsh Saints illegitimacy is almost a characteristic. There was also among the Celts no person who could grant a dispensation, as no supreme ecclesiastical authority was recognised; and the Celtic bishop had not of himself any such power, nor was he the officer of any authority who claimed any such power. In considering this point, it must be borne in mind that the Latin Church counted as illegitimate, not only persons actually born out of wedlock, but also persons whose parents had gone through the ceremony of marriage, but whose union the Latin Church did not consider as a marriage, such as the

[1] *Registrum Palatinum Dunelmense*, Rolls ed., vol. iii, pp. 304, 502.

children of the marriage of cousins, or of persons in orders. Nothing is more misleading at first sight than the way Latin ecclesiastical writers speak of the result of such unions. There is a case in the Worcester register of a parish priest who was tried and deprived, it is said, for incest; the real fact was that he had misconducted himself with one of his parishioners, who was ecclesiastically regarded as his daughter, and so this charge was made.[1] The way in which the Celtic Church regarded the issue of the marriage of a priest is shown in the case of Sulien, bishop of St. David's; not only was he bishop, but he also had sons. According to Latin ideas, these sons were born in adultery, and could not have received orders at all; but being Celts, members of the tribe of the Saint, they were ordained as of course; and, so far from their birth being considered to be any impediment, one of Sulien's sons, Rhyddmarch, succeeded him as bishop, and another son, Daniel, would have been bishop, if Henry I had not set aside the Welsh election, and given the see to his wife's chaplain. Far from his marriage being considered a disgrace, Sulien is spoken of as "*y doethaf or Brytanyeit*".[2] Another son, Jevan, wrote a poem in his father's praise, in which he makes the fact of the bishop having four sons a matter for special praise. Indeed, it seems to have been merely the high-handed action of Henry I that prevented the see of St. David's becoming hereditary in the Sulien family.

It is, at first sight, a matter of surprise that the mark given at ordination, the outward and visible sign of a person having received orders, should have proved so violent a matter of controversy between the Latin and Celtic Churches: probably there was no single point that

[1] *Sede Vacante Register*, p. 169.
[2] *Brut y Tywysogion*, Rolls ed., p. 54.

caused more violent or more bitter feuds than the Roman and Celtic forms of tonsure. The probable explanation is, that the Celtic tonsure was some survival of Pagan worship which the Celtic Christian took over with other survivals from the heathen, and that still after it was used by the Christians was supposed to possess some peculiar Pagan virtue. In its original form it was nothing more than the outward mark the bearer wore, to show the tribe or person to whom he belonged; as now, on buying a cow or a sheep at a fair, the purchaser marks it with his own mark to identify it, so, in early times, when a man belonged to any tribe or chief, a mark was placed on him to identify him as the property of the chief or tribe. In the version given in the *Book of Armagh*, of the legend of the daughters of Loeghaire,[1] after relating their death, the wizard, Caplet, who had brought them up, is said to to have come to Patrick, who preached to him, and he believed "*et capilli capitis ejus ablati sunt*", and the same is said of his brother Mael. In the *Tripartite Life*, where the same incident is related as to Caplet, it is said Patrick "put the shears round his hair".[2] This may mean anything, either the Celtic or Latin tonsure, but it shows that becoming a Christian implied some mark was made. The account in the *Book of Armagh* with regard to the Druid Mael, differs; it states, "et ablati sunt capilli capitis illius id est norma magica [quæ prius] in capite videbatur airbacc ut dicitur giunnæ".[3] The "*norma magica*", the magical rule, or heathen tonsure, is here called "*airbacc giunnæ*", and was considered by the Latin as a brand of hell. What this "*airbacc giunnæ*" was precisely, does not appear clear, but it seems what Patrick did was, to cut out the old mark of ownership, that is, to

[1] *Tripartite Life*, Rolls ed., p. 317. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 103.
[3] *Book of Armagh*, fol. 12, printed in *Tripartite Life*, ii, 317.

remove the old form of tonsure. The next passage helps to explain what was done: "De hoc verbum quod clarius est omnibus verbis Scoticis similis est Calvus contra Caplit".[1] Probably both the Druids were treated alike, Mael the same as Caplet; both were made bald by having part of the head shaved from ear to ear, and thus all marks of former ownership removed. It may well be that this form was adopted because it effaced the old mark. It was clearly a sign of reproach for some time, as the Druids spoke of the Christians who bore the mark of tonsure as "Adzeheads".[2]

It is probable that the Irish Druids accepted Christianity as a matter of fact, more than as a matter of faith, and probably they used the new form of tonsure to show to the Irish that they possessed the same power of working miracles as the Christian priests, and this may have been to some extent the reason for the intense hatred of the Latins to the Celtic tonsure. Of the Celtic tonsure there appear to have been several forms; the tonsure of a slave differed from that of a monk. In a MS. *Life of Patrick*,[3] it is stated that "he proceeded to Martin in Tours, and he tonsured a monk's tonsure upon him, for it was a slave's tonsure he had always up to that time". The Celtic tonsure, according to the *Catalogue of Saints*, continued during the first two orders of Saints, but it is said that during the third order the Roman method had come in, and some used one form, some the other. It is, however, hardly likely that the Latin tonsure had prevailed to any great extent in Ireland at the alleged date of the list. It will be remembered that the Latin tonsure was a circular crown, said to be derived

[1] *Book of Armagh, Tripartite Life*, Rolls ed., ii, 317.
[2] *Tripartite Life*, i. 35.
[3] *Tripartite Life*, Rolls ed. xlix, MS. H. 3, 18, in Trin. Coll., Dublin.

from the crown of thorns, as opposed to the Celtic, the shaving of all the head in front of a line drawn from ear to ear. In a passage in Reeves' *Adamnan*, relating a conversation between Adamnan and Abbot Coelfrid, Adamnan is said to have addressed Coelfrid, "O, holy brother, who believest thou art advancing to the crown of a life that knows no end, why dost thou wear on thy head, by a custom contrary to thy faith, the figure of a crown which is bounded?" [1]

The name for the Celtic tonsure, "Tonsure of Simon Magus", is a phrase whose origin has given rise to some discussion. It occurs in the *Epistle of Gildas*, "Britones toti mundo contrarii moribus Romanii inimici non solum in missa sed in tonsura etiam cum Judæis umbræ magis futurorum servientes quam veritati. Romani dicunt Britonum tonsura a Symone Mago sumpsisse exordium traditur cujus tonsura omnem capitis anteriorem partem ab aure ad aurem tantum contingebat pro excellentia ipsa Magorum tonsura qua sola frons anterior tegi solebat priorum. Auctorem vero hujus tonsuræ in Hibernia subulcum regis Loigairi filii Neil extitisse Patricii sermo testatur; ex quo Hibernenses pene omnes hanc tonsuram sumserunt." [2] This passage is quoted in the Irish canons.[3] Rhys [4] says that it arises from the use made of the term Magi, for Druid, and hence the Druid tonsure was that of a Magus, and a Druid is turned into Simon Magus, hence the "tonsure of Simon Magus". There is another version. In O'Mulconry's *Glossary*, which is cited by Whitley Stokes in the *Tripartite Life*,[5] under the head *Irla*, a slave's tonsure, the following story is told: "A bishop of the Cornish Britons once went to Rome. As he was

[1] Reeves, *Adamnan*, xlvii, 350.
[2] *Gildas*; *H. and S.*, i, 112.
[3] *Tripartite Life*, ii, 509.
[4] *Celtic Britain*, 69.
[5] Rolls ed., ii, 509; note 2.

returning, Simon the wizard's school met him. They shave his crown from his back, so that he was one of Simon's community, for this is the tonsure that was on Simon. And he (the bishop) had profit thereof, for he endured that disgrace for God's sake, until he went to heaven. It is hence that the Briton and the Gaul received the practice." Whether Simon the wizard ever had any independent existence outside this legend is doubtful, but the legend is of importance as showing the signification of tonsure. It meant ownership; the bishop having it, became one of the wizard's gang. It is probable that the inference of ownership was the ground why the Latins so objected to the Celtic tonsure. Another explanation of the term "Simon Magus' tonsure" may be suggested. It seems fairly certain that a Celtic bishop was entitled to charge some fees in some way for conferring orders—Bishop Etchen's case has already been noticed.[1] Taking money for spiritual gifts was the sin of Simon Magus. If the Irish Druids accepted Christianity only as a mode of increasing their supernatural powers, and if they gave anything for having orders conferred, and the Celtic tonsure was the mark of such orders, then there can be little doubt that no worse taunt against such of the Celts as were in orders could be found, than charging them with bearing on their brow the mark that showed they had committed the same sin as that of Simon Magus.

It was probably, however, to the fact that in Wales, tonsure and ownership were synonymous terms that led to the fierce fight on the subject. To show how closely the ideas of tonsure and ownership were mixed up, no better instance can be given than the story of Twrch Trwyth.[2] Kilhwch is sent by his parents to Arthur to make his submission and become his man, and to ask a favour.

[1] See *ante*, p. 209.

[2] *Mabinogion*, 2nd ed., 217.

"Arthur is thy cousin" (so Kilhwch was entitled to become one of his men, and be admitted as a tribesman): "Go unto Arthur to cut thy hair," that is, to be admitted as one of the tribe. On arriving at Arthur's court, Kilhwch asked Arthur "to bless his hair". Arthur took a comb and scissors, combed his hair, and asked who he was, "for I know thou art come of my blood". Thus the admission to the tribe, the becoming Arthur's man, is shown by Arthur cutting his hair. In the subsequent adventures of Kilhwch the idea of tonsure again occurs. He asks the king, Yspaddaden Penkawr, for his daughter Olwen, and is told a list of things he must do before he could win the daughter, or, in other words, before the father would admit himself conquered. The king required his head to be washed and his beard shaved, and his hair arranged with the comb and scissors that were between the ears of Twrch Trwyth, before he would give his daughter; that was, he was to be conquered and admit himself conquered before he would surrender his daughter. At last the labours were accomplished, and they shaved the king clean off to the very bone, from ear to ear—the Celtic tonsure. The king admitted his defeat, and gave up his daughter. This story is a curious instance showing what tonsure meant among the Celts; it was surrender of independence—admission of ownership. If this is borne in mind, it is perhaps not so difficult to understand the great importance the Welsh attached to it, and why they refused to adopt the Latin tonsure. If they had, it would in their view have been an admission of the supremacy of the Latin Church, and of their subjection to it. This they would not do, and so would not adopt it; and it was because the Latins saw the importance of getting such an admission that they made such a point of the adoption of their form of tonsure. It was not that it

was idolatrous—that it was the mark of the beast; it was because the Welsh regarded it as an admission of subjection that the Latins pressed it so strongly, and the Welsh resisted it so stoutly. And it was probably viewed in this light, the importance of all her dependents bearing the outward and visible sign of the subjection to Rome, that Theodore of Tarsus, who had previously had only the Pauline or Greek tonsure, which consisted in shaving the whole head, was kept at Rome before he was despatched to England until his hair grew, and he could be properly tonsured with St. Peter's, or the Latin tonsure, so that no possible mistake could arise, and it could not be said that he bore the accursed Celtic, or St. John's tonsure. Although at first sight the fight over the tonsure seems one of the most utterly absurd of ecclesiastical disputes, yet, when viewed in the light in which the Welsh regarded it, and the light in which the Latins understood it, the difficulty passes away, and it appears to be as it was—one incident of the great battle for supremacy between the two churches. Rhys points out,[1] as showing how deeply the question of tonsure had taken root among the Celts, that the Welsh name for a hermit, *mewdwy*, literally means "God's slave", while the Irish for a hermit is *maelpha-draic*, meaning the bald or tonsured slave of Patrick. There is a striking passage in the Scotch Laws[2] describing the different ways in which a person could become a villein, or bondsman. It first states this could be done by descent, then the next is by tonsure. When some freeman, for a particular reason, either for protection or maintenance, or some other motive, gives himself up as a bondsman to the Lord in his court, this is done by cutting the front hair of the person's head in the full court, in the presence of all the tribesmen. This lay ceremony of

[1] *Celtic Britain*, 72. [2] *Acts of Parliament of Scotland*, i, 655.

cutting off the front hair has a very close resemblance to the ecclesiastical ceremony of tonsure. It is also to be observed that both in the service for the consecration of an abbot, and in the coronation service of the English kings, a case of tonsure is to be found. In the Evesham service for consecrating an abbot the use of a comb is spoken of as part of the ritual.[1] In the coronation service of Charles I, King Edward's comb is directed to be used.[2]

One great result of orders being conferred upon a person was to make him, if he was a bondsman, free; he became, not merely his owner's servant, but also the servant of God, and, as such, free. The idea on which this was based has survived in English law, in the principle that the crown cannot be co-owner of a chattel with a subject;[3] if any share in a chattel becomes the property of the crown, the whole passes to it, as it is beneath the dignity of the crown to hold in common with a subject. So the recipient of orders, on becoming the servant of God, having the mark of heathen slavery effaced (the servile tonsure), and the mark of Divine ownership substituted (the Celtic tonsure), became the servant of God, and therefore free from all human servitude. The *Senchus Mor* states this as one of the results of Christianity: "The slaves shall be free,[4] and plebeians shall be exalted by receiving church grades, and by performing penitential services to God, for the Lord is accessible, he will not refuse any kind of person after belief, either among the noble or plebeian tribes, so likewise is the Church open for every person who goes under her rule." In the gloss

[1] *Officium ecclesiasticum abbatum secundum usum Eveshamensis monasterii*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. vi, p. 1, col. 1, line 31.

[2] *The Manner of the Coronation of Charles I*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. ii, p. 35.

[3] A. G., v.

[4] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 31.

on this passage, it is stated that the meaning of the expression, "the enslaved shall be freed" is, that it refers to men who are admitted to learning. So it seems that, whenever a person, slave or otherwise, was admitted to a religious house, that being the meaning of learning, and received any ecclesiastical grade, he at once became free. A similar idea is found in the Welsh laws:[1] "When a church is consecrated in a villein township (*taeog tref*), with the permission of the king, a man of that *trev* who might be a villein (*taeog*) in the morning, became at night a free man." This seems to imply that the fact of the erection of a church makes the township, from being in a servile condition, into a free township;—the persons residing in it would cease to be the slaves of the chief of the lay tribe, and would become members of the tribe of the Saint, and one of the results of such membership was freedom; as, in the Irish laws, the slave was freed by becoming a member of the tribe of the Saint. This view is strongly borne out by another passage in the same chapter of the *Dimetian Code:* A clerk, who, on the day before he received the tonsure, was the son of a villein *taeog*, became, on the night he received it, a free man."[2] The Welsh is worth notice: "*yscolheic ydyd kynn caffel corun yn vab tayaбe ar nos honno yn 6r ryd.*" It was a scholar, one of the pupils at the monastery, on his admission to the tribe of the Saint, the admission being shown by his being tonsured, his head being crowned, who became a free man. It was not the tonsure that made him free; it was the fact that he was a tribesman, the proof of which was shown by the tonsure—the tribal mark. These passages go to prove that the effect of the spread of the colonies of the mother house was to do away with slavery, and raise the condition of the people. This could be done in two

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 445. [2] *Ibid.*

ways, either by the erection of a church in a township, where, if the place belonged to the church, it became the property of the tribe of the Saint, and the district became free; or, when a student at the monastery was admitted to the tribe of the Saint, as a consequence of such admission, he became free. So the effect of the development of the monastic colonies was to do away to some extent with slavery.

Another effect a monastic clergy must have had, was to keep the benefices in the hands of the monastery. Although, probably, the Celtic clergy were not, in strict law, technically a corporation, they were practically not far removed from being one. They formed groups of societies, to some one of which groups in their opinion each of the ecclesiastical benefices of the country belonged, and belonged in the sense of private ownership. It was not merely the right of presenting a priest to the living when a vacancy occurred, but it was the personal ownership of the district in which the church was situated. To the monasteries, in their opinion, and probably in that of most people of that time, the different churches belonged, like any other property. The church, that is, the monastery, had created them, and she claimed them as her children. The priests, who resided at the churches, belonged either to the monastery or to some of her daughter houses. In later times, when the connection with the mother house became slighter, the priests at their different churches married, and had children, whom they trained up, either at the churches, or at the mother house, and their sons became priests, they expected that their sons would take their places at the church. To a great extent this was done, with the result that the clergy belonging to each church as members of the tribe of the Saint looked upon this particular church as their portion of the tribal

property, that is, as their own peculiar inheritance. As has already been shown, in some Celtic monasteries, not only did the abbacy become hereditary, but the bishopric and other offices had a similar tendency, and it is therefore only a natural result that the same state of things should produce the same result in the local churches, and that they should, in fact, become hereditary in the colonies of ecclesiastics who served them. The fact that they did become so, is now generally admitted; it could not be otherwise on the evidence that remains. Giraldus speaks of it as an ordinary state of things, and one that he contends calls loudly for reform. The reason usually given for it is that celibacy was never really a custom of the Welsh clergy. Doubtless this had a good deal to do with it, but if the Welsh clergy had practised the most rigid celibacy, a somewhat similar condition of things would have prevailed; the churches would have been regarded as the property of the priests who resided at them. The real reason for this state of things, and the reason that gave it its great strength was, that it formed a part survival of the old tribal idea. How firmly the system was rooted will be seen from the invective of Giraldus against it. Kerry, a Montgomeryshire parish, had two rectors; another parish, Bettws Kadwaladyr, six or seven. Jones and Freeman, who admit the existence of this state of things, argue[1] that it does not imply a collegiate foundation—a statement which is very true; but they contend it is "simply an instance of portionist rectories, such as are still to be found in England," which is a much more doubtful assertion. In the English portionist rectory each portionist merely receives a payment, and was simply in the position of an annuitant. In the Welsh cases the actual benefice was held by more

[1] *History of St. David's*, 274.

than one incumbent—each was an actual rector. Speaking technically, in the English portionist rectory, the living was charged with certain annuities, but held by one tenant subject to the annuities. In the Welsh case the benefice was held by several rectors as tenants in common. Jones and Freeman allege that "the true origin of this state of things, and the feature that made them so obnoxious to Giraldus, was the succession system, in accordance with which the benefices, like the land, was divided by gavel-kind".[1] This is a partial, but only a partial explanation. There was no division; had there been, the number of rectors would have soon become enormous, and there is no evidence of any great variation in the number of rectors. The benefice formed part of the tribal property in which all the members of the tribe were entitled to share, the numbers varied, the occupiers varied, but, if they were tribesmen, they had their share. It was not the benefice that was altered, or the shares in it divided, it was that the persons who formed the group, who were entitled to the benefice, varied from time to time, and, occasionally, were not all in orders. The fact of orders had nothing to do with holding a benefice, the only question was, were they members of the tribe? When this view is grasped, the case of the rectory of Hay, which Jones and Freeman cite as something so dreadful, is only an illustration of the rule. It was held by two brothers, one a priest and one a layman. They speak of it as "a grave abuse", and say, "as there is no trace of such arrangement in later times, they are justified in ascribing it to the ante-Norman period".[2] It was simply the case of one of the tribesmen being in orders, and the other not; each had a share as tribesman in the benefice, and would have had if neither had been

[1] *History of St. David's*, 274. [2] *Ibid.*

in orders. It happened at that date that one only was in orders, probably, soon after, all the tribesmen entitled to share were in orders. It is true it belongs to an ante-Norman period, for it is a feature, and a most characteristic feature, of the Welsh tribal system as applied to churches. No better instance could be given of the futility of trying to find from Latin sources an explanation for a Celtic custom. Tribesmen held the tribal property—the fact that they were not all of the same calling, was a mere detail not worth consideration.

The best evidence of the system is to be found in Pope Nicholas' *Valor*, which gives a list of all the benefices in the country, about the year 1291. In the diocese of St. Asaph, it is the exception for the churches to be held by one man. Out of one hundred and eleven benefices, no less than sixty-five are held in common by two or more persons. Usually rectors and vicars are spoken of, but other persons are often joined with them. Frequent references are also made to one of the co-owners being beneficed elsewhere, that is, that the tribe to which the man belonged had, among the tribal property, more than one church. It is true the term "portio" is used in the record; that, however, proves nothing. It merely arises from the fact that the Latin scribe considered that the Welsh benefices, when more than one name appeared, were in the same position as the English under the same circumstances—a natural conjecture, but not one entitled to any weight.

In the English cases, "portion" means a fixed annual payment to a named individual, that is, an annuity out of the proceeds of the benefice—a pension, just as a retired incumbent at the present day gets a pension out of the living. In Wales it meant that there was more than one incumbent, each of whom was entitled to a share in the profits of the

living. Thus, in the case of Bettws Kadwaladyr, six persons are named, but no rector or vicar, and the value of the benefice is divided among them. After the names of three of the six is the word "Presbyter". It would therefore seem that the benefice was held as part of the tribal property by the heads of the six families who made up the tribe, three were, and three were not, in orders—a precisely similar case to Hay, and one that should excite far greater indignation. Once the tribal principle is admitted, there is no difficulty nor any anomaly about all these matters. The heads of the families composing the tribe each received their share of the undivided tribal property. This is, at least, a reasonable explanation, and one which can be justified on historical grounds; but pass from Celtic to Latin reasons, and it is almost impossible to find any satisfactory solution of the different matters that are continually to be met with. Lay rectors are not unknown to the English law or the Latin Church, but for a benefice to be held in common between clergymen and laymen is a state of things neither the Latin Church nor the English law seem to have ever contemplated. It is a curious fact that, as appears from Pope Nicholas' *Valor*, these benefices held in common occur more frequently in North Wales than in South Wales, and of the two North Wales dioceses, more frequently in St. Asaph than in Bangor. This is a point on which a satisfactory explanation is very difficult to give. As to the different state of things in the dioceses of Bangor and St. Asaph, Archdeacon Thomas[1] gives as the reason that in the first taxation of the diocese of St. Asaph in 1254, the number of persons who shared in the benefices was so large that the share of each individual fell below the limit of taxation. Archbishop Peckham, in his visitation

[1] *Diocesan History of St. Asaph*, 48.

in 1284 (a visitation that did more to efface the Celtic Church than anything else), provided that as these small portions were so ruinous to the clergy, as they gave a sum on which it was quite impossible for the recipient to exist, yet the amount that they took from the benefice left the person who did the duty so little, that he could not live on it, all the small portions were to be united. This was accordingly done some time between the taxation of 1284 and 1291, the date of Pope Nicholas' *Valor*. So when the second taxation was made, by reason of the union of the smaller shares, the then shares of the owners who were left came up to the taxation limit, and that therefore in the taxation recorded in Pope Nicholas' *Valor*, the co-owner had to submit to be taxed. If this is so, and it is assumed that the reform had at the time of the *Valor* been more thoroughly carried out in St. Asaph than elsewhere, as that was the diocese where Peckham began his visitation, and where his reforms were first commenced, an explanation is given. The number of united rectories made it appear that the rectorial system was more numerous there than elsewhere, the real fact being that the diocese of St. Asaph was reformed, while the other three were not. Thus, while the number of co-owners appears to be larger in St. Asaph, in fact they were not actually so, and that no proper inference can be drawn from the record having regard to these facts. The truth being that while the number of co-owned benefices in St. Asaph appear more numerous, they are really fewer in number, while, in the three other dioceses they appear to be fewer, they are really more; their absence from the *Valor* being due to their large number, and consequently to the small sum each co-owner would receive. This most ingenious view offers a reasonable explanation of a fact that it is otherwise hard to explain at all.

The system of co-ownership of benefices was not in any way confined to Wales; it seems to have extended to wherever the Celtic tribal idea went. In Ireland, all the families that made up the tribe were entitled to receive something out of the produce of the tribe lands. The amount received varied with the different circumstances of the tribe, and, in some cases, the amount the individual tribesman received was very small. But whether the shares were small or great, the principle was the same—the produce of the tribal lands was divided among the members of the tribe. The principle extended to all tribal property, land, ecclesiastical benefices, or any other kind. The idea was that the tribesmen were entitled to live out of the tribal property. To the Celt it would have been passing strange if this had not been the case; among the Celts there was nothing that lasted longer and were more deeply cherished than these relics of tribal life. And it may well be that Archbishop Peckham found that what he had caused to be done in St. Asaph was the limit of what he was able to do. In the more Welsh dioceses of Bangor and St. David's, any attempt at such a reform might well have been hopeless, for speaking of St. David's, Giraldus says, when referring to the custom, "the Church has almost as many parsons or parties as there are principal men in the parish, and that the sons, after the decease of their fathers, succeed to the ecclesiastical benefices, not by election, but by hereditary right, possessing and polluting the sanctuary of God; and if a bishop perchanced to presume to appoint or institute any other person, the people would certainly revenge the injury on the institution and the instituted." Strong as is this language, it does not appear, as far as can be judged, to be too strong to describe the practice that had grown up in the Celtic Church, and which the people were prepared

to defend against the Latins. The clergy were daily becoming more and more local and independent, such resistance as there was to the English conquerors rested with the Church, and with it alone, for the lay power had collapsed. If the clergy once allowed it to be established that a foreign official (the Pope) could present to benefices, and thus get rid of the hereditary tribal rights, all that remained to the Welsh of the old tribal system would be abolished. It was for this that the Welsh fought and resisted. The Latin bishops who held the Welsh sees were not the men to get rid of the tribal notions; any attempt, or suspected attempt of theirs to do so, would cause an uproar, and that was the last thing their master desired. So matters were allowed to rest. It would not be accurate to say the benefices became hereditary; yet they acquired a way of keeping in local hands, or in the hands of a particular family. Probably what caused most of the friction in Wales at the time of the Reformation, was the destruction that fell upon these relics of tribal customs. When the Reformation bishops interfered, which, it is true, was not very often, they only interfered to thrust into a living a stranger or relation, thereby making the discontent greater than before. Even at the present day, any one but a local man who is appointed to a Welsh benefice has a hard task to surmount the local prejudice there is against him when entering on his new cure. Probably much of the hatred of the clergy of the establishment is due to the fact that they are still felt to be the representatives of the system that turned the tribe out of its possessions, and so are therefore to be regarded as the hereditary enemies of the locality and its inhabitants. The history of the presentation to Welsh benefices is a very remarkable chapter in Welsh Church history; for while on the one hand, it tells the triumph

of the Latin over the Celt, yet, on the other hand, it shows how long tribal and local ideas will live in a district, as it shows the hostility that the inhabitants of the district, where once the tribe dwelt, still regard the successors of their arrogant conquerors.

Very nearly allied to the question of the hereditary nature of the Welsh benefices is the question, which is one of the great features of the Celtic Church, the non-celibacy of the clergy. Probably the Welsh clergy are the only body of ecclesiastics who can boast that at all times in their history they have refused to have forced upon them the doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy. The history of their resistance to it is one of the most striking parts of the story of the Celtic Church. It appears from the *Epistle of Gildas*, that the British clergy of his days did not profess celibacy, at least this is the charitable inference from his somewhat turgid way of speaking of their morality,[1] and it would seem that until 961, the marriage of the clergy was not only not forbidden, but was regularly recognized. This is shown by several things: by a passage under that year in the *Gwentian Brut*—"The priests were enjoined not to marry without the leave of the Pope, on which account a great disturbance took place in the diocese of Teilo, so that it was considered best to allow matrimony to the priests." From this it is clear that the marriage of priests was at that time a regular custom. Whether the usual reading of "*heb fyned yng nghennad y Pab*", without the leave of the Pope, is the correct one or not, is very doubtful. The Pope's authority was certainly not at that date recognized or admitted in Wales, but this is of small importance, for the passage shows clearly the resistance to celibacy. At that time Dunstan was carrying out his reforms in the

[1] See *Epistle of Gildas*, caps. 66, 67.

English Church, and it was but to be expected that an attempt would be made to extend those reforms, and with them his jurisdiction, and to enforce celibacy on the Welsh clergy. The attempt was a failure. A passage in Hywel Da's laws is often cited to prove that marriage among the clergy was not then recognized, and that the offspring was illegitimate. The passage is in the *Dimetian Code*,[1] and is one specifying the three cases where sons are not to share in land with their brothers by the same father and mother. The second case is the one relied on: "When a clerk takes a wife by gift of kindred, and has a son by her, and afterwards the clerk takes priest's orders, and subsequently when a priest has a son by the same woman, the son previously begotten is not to share land with such son, as he was begotten contrary to decree."[2] The passage is made obscure by the last words; but for this, which may be an interpolation, and only inserted as giving the meaning of the passage, or what the transcriber thought was its meaning, the article is clear enough, if tribal rules are applied to it. A son born before a man became a tribesman could not share with a son born after a man became a tribesman, because the second would be entitled to become a tribesman, to have a share in the tribal property, of which all his father's property became part when he became a tribesman. The first son would not become a tribesman as of right, so could not share in the tribal property. His father, by becoming a member of the tribe, had ceased to possess private property, so his sons could not share, as only one was entitled to tribal rights.

Such is the obvious explanation but for the last words, and these certainly cause a difficulty. It will be seen they do not say the second born son is illegitimate, but

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 445. [2] See *Ibid.*, 760.

that the first born, the one born before the man took priest's orders, is not to share. If the words are regarded as having any reference to legitimacy, they really go to this, that the son born before the clerk took priest's orders is illegitimate, the son born after, legitimate. This cannot be the meaning, and it seems the tribal explanation mentioned above is the most satisfactory. This is not the usual interpretation. Jones and Freeman regard the passage as declaring the children born after ordination illegitimate. "Yet it" (marriage of priests), they say, "appears to have been discouraged by the laws of the country, as the son of the priest born after his ordination was regarded as illegitimate, and had no share in his father's property."[1] This seems to be a far-fetched interpretation, if the passage can be said to bear such a meaning, which is doubtful. Most modern writers, since Jones and Freeman, have followed their view without question. It will be enough to quote the last, Mr. Newell:[2] "Some hint of a feeling against the custom (marriage of the clergy) may be discovered in the laws of Hywel Da, which draw a distinction between a son born before his father had taken priest's orders, and one born after." The passage is then cited. It is quite true a distinction is drawn, but, as has been already pointed out, it is the son born after the priest had married who takes the property. If the whole passage is examined, it will be seen that it has no reference to legitimacy or illegitimacy, nor to the celibacy of the clergy or anything of the kind, it is merely a statement of cases where, by the Welsh tribal rules, a father's property was not divided among all his sons. If evidence is required that the Celtic Church recognized the marriage of the clergy, many authorities might be cited to prove it; one Irish and one

[1] Jones and Freeman, *St. David's*, 273. [2] Newell, *Welsh Church*, 170.

Welsh will be sufficient. In the canons, said to have been made at a synod of Patrick, Auxilius, and Issernius, the sixth provides for the dress of the wives of the clergy, "Quicunque clericus ab hostiario usque ad sacerdotem . . . et uxor ejus si non velato capite ambulaverit pariter a laicis contempnentur et ab ecclesia separentur."[1] In the poem by Jevan, setting out the virtues of Sulien, the bishop of St. David's, a poem of a date about 1100, one of his claims to admiration is stated to be that he was the father of four sons:—

> "Quatuor ac proprio nutrivit sanguine natos
> Quos simul edocuit dulci libaminis amne
> Ingenio claros; jam sunt hæc nomina quorum,
> Rycymarch sapiens, Arthgen, Danielque, Johannes."[2]

Showing that at that date the Celtic Church not only did not try to conceal the fact that the bishops were married but rather considered that it was a mark of distinction for bishops to have a family.

There can be no doubt but that the Latin Church was constantly in the habit of reproaching the Celtic Church for allowing the marriage of her clergy. There can also be no doubt that such marriages were regarded as perfectly lawful by the Welsh Church until after the Norman conquest, and the changes that accompanied the advent of the Norman bishops—Bernard and Urban. With the Normans a change doubtless set in, and a determined effort was made to force celibacy on the Welsh clergy. In none of the three codes which make up the laws of Hywel Da, except the passage already cited from the *Dimetian Code*, is there anything that can be twisted by the utmost ingenuity as prescribing the celibacy of the clergy. But when Latin monks began to influence Welsh law, a different set of things is found. In the

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, ii, part 2, p. 328. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 666.

Cyvreithiau Cymru, and the *Leges Walliæ*, will be seen the way the Latin Church enforced her ideas on the subject. She had tried to do it directly, and failed miserably, but, indirectly, much was done. Whoever it was who made the rule that a married priest could not give evidence,[1] was a man who was not unacquainted with Welsh nature. The passage in which this occurs shows from internal evidence it was the work of a stranger; it is a deliberate attempt to set tribe against tribe, and exalt the power of the conqueror. The priest on marrying did not infringe any rule or law of his own church; but the Latins placed an indirect penalty on him for it, by making him inadmissible as a witness in a court of justice. Another passage in the *Cyvreithiau Cymru* is to the same effect, and shows, if possible, more clearly the finger of the foreign ecclesiastic:—"Whatever person," it says, "shall break his vow of religion, whether a monk, a prior, an anchorite, or an hermit, or any kind of religious person bound in the service of God, or a priest who shall take a wife after the bond of priesthood, their testimony is not to be credited in any place, and they are excluded from the law, unless they seek a pardon from the Pope, or the bishop, through a public penance."[2]

This is obviously an attempt to place the Welsh clergy in the same position as the Latin, by the assumption, the untrue assumption, that they had taken vows of celibacy. The passage relates to those who had broken vows of religion, and, as the Latin priest had vowed celibacy, it was thought if the Welsh had not, he ought to have done so, and was placed in the same position as if he had. No better instance could be given of the way the conquerors tried to force their views on the conquered by editing their laws than this. There is also the oft cited

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 204. [2] *Ibid.*, ii, 409.

passage where the author, or editor, in stating a series of legal principles, mentions the nine maxims of the law and the thirteen things "which corrupt the world which will ever remain in it, and it can never be delivered of". The four first are, "An unjust king, a weak lord, a transgressing judge, a married priest".[1]

Such are the positive enactments of the Welsh laws on the subject of the celibacy of the clergy; from them it seems clear that, prior to the advent of the Norman bishops, marriage of the clergy was the rule in Wales, but from that date the Latins tried by various ways, and among others by "editing" the laws, to introduce and enforce celibacy. They did not succeed. In vain did that "*Quidam Normanus*", as the compiler of the *Annales Cambriæ* calls Bernard, endeavour to introduce Latin customs and Roman reforms; doubtless he did much, but the celibacy of the clergy was not one of his reforms. His successor in the see of St. David's, Fitzgerald, had a large family; whether, in deference to the views of the Latin Church, he called their mother his wife, or by a less reputable name, may be doubtful. The custom of the marriage of the Welsh clergy was so universal that in 1175 certain canons were made at a council at Westminster by Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury,[2] prohibiting it, "Wallenses non vendant ecclesias vel dent in dotem vel consanguineis adhæreant vel commutent uxores". But the best evidence of the prevalence of the custom is to be found in the writings of Giraldus Cambrensis. Desirous to show his fitness for episcopacy, he denounced in no measured language the families of the Welsh clergy; for instance, in the prologue to the *De jure et statu Menevensis ecclesiæ*,[3] he says: "Præcipueque

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 346.
[2] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 382. [3] Roll's ed., iii, p. 114.

cathedrales sedium episcopalium ecclesias a vitiis radicatis olim et tamquam innatis publicis scilicet fornicationibus et successionibus purget; per universos quoque Walliæ fines incestuosos cognatarum amplexus. et sanguine propinquarum a laicis; cujusmodi labe tota fere illa gens laborat. . . . Committentur autem a clericis præcipue vitia tria concubinarum scilicet cohabitationes et ecclesiarum participationes enormes quoque filiorum post patres in ecclesiæ bonis successiones." He goes on in the book to charge the canons of St. David's, especially the Welsh ones, with what he calls "gross immorality"; he says:[1] "Canonicos Menevenses fere cunctos maxime vero Walensicos publicos fornicarios et concubinarios esse sub alis ecclesiæ cathedralis et tamquam in ipso ejusdem gremio focarias suas cum obstetricibus et nutricibus atque cunabulis in laribus et penetralibus exhibentes." This passage rather leads to the belief that Giraldus is bent on showing the fervour of his faith in the Latin Church, so as to receive favours from the Pope to aid his election, rather than giving an accurate statement of fact. If the canons were not married they would hardly have dared, even at St. David's, to have "gloried in their shame" to the extent of having midwives, nurses, and cradles, under the shadow of the cathedral. But it must always be remembered that an ecclesiastic, when speaking of the sexual relations of ecclesiastics, is unable to use ordinary language. A German bishop styled a married bishop an adulterer; a Worcester scribe, as has been already pointed out, styled a *liaison* between a priest and his dairymaid, incest; so it would not be surprising if Giraldus called a married canon a fornicator. It was by following up his abuse of the married clergy that Giraldus gained promotion. The Archdeacon of Brecon,

[1] Rolls ed., iii, p. 128.

Jordan, had married, and the fact of the marriage is strong evidence that the custom of clerical marriage was still common. The archdeacon saw nothing wrong in it, but Giraldus did. Full of zeal, either for the Latin Church or his own promotion, he attacked the archdeacon for keeping a concubine, and admonished him to put her away. To us it might seem that the course advocated by Giraldus would cause the greater scandal. The archdeacon naturally took no notice of Giraldus, or his admonition. Whatever the virtues of Giraldus were, mildness of language was not one; he sent the archdeacon a second admonition, which was couched in terms which could not be accurately described as strong. It had its effect, as the archdeacon lost his temper, and in his reply, if he used the language which Giraldus tells us he did, all that can be said is, he was a greater master of abuse than his rival. Acting on the advice of Giraldus, the Archbishop of Canterbury removed the archdeacon from his archdeaconry, and gave it to Giraldus. Jordan retired to a prebend, where he and his wife could live in peace. This incident shows that in spite of all the efforts of the Latin Church, the Welsh clergy still persisted in the custom of marrying. The practice continued in spite of the invectives of Giraldus. Archbishop Peckham, in his injunctions to the diocese of St. Asaph, speaks of the vice of incontinence among the clergy being "*ultra modum*", he probably alludes to marriage, for he speaks of the incontinence of the beneficed clergy and their concubines, never their wives.[1] He makes the same complaint as to St. David's, and orders that delinquents are not to be punished by fines, but by deprivation.[2] This, however, failed to get rid of the practice. A century and a half later, in the time of Bishop de la Bere, of St. David's,

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 563. [2] *Ibid.*, 572.

1447–1460, a petition was presented to the bishop by his clergy, asking to be allowed to retain their wives. The reason they gave was, that if they put them away on the one suggestion of illegality, they, the clergy, would have to meet the vengeance of their wives' relations. The bishop acceded to their view, and allowed his clergy to retain their wives. However irregular to strict church disciplinarians this may seem, it is strong evidence of the fact that the marriage of the clergy was practised to a very great extent during the fifteenth century in Wales. Even up to the Reformation it seems that licenses to marry were granted by the bishops to the Welsh clergy. It is true, some writers state, that these licenses were for concubines, not for wives; this, however, does not seem to have been the case, and neither the Welsh clergy nor bishops had sunk quite so low. It thus seems to be clearly established that from the earliest times to the Reformation, the Welsh clergy not only married but succeeded in maintaining their right to marry, in spite of all the attempts of the Latins for over four hundred years, from 1115 to 1530, to force celibacy upon them. That among the English clergy, while under the rule of the Roman Church, concubinage was common, seems not to be denied; but it was not so with the Welsh, except in so far as their conquerors called their marriages concubinage. The Welsh clergy are the only clerical body who have, from first to last, in spite of all opposition, asserted and maintained their right to marry. When the clergy of the rest of Europe were pledged, as a matter of principle, to celibacy, but tempered it in practice by fornication, the Welsh clergy remained alone the defenders of the right, the absolute right, of the clergy to marry. That they did this, and were able to do it, was probably due to the reason given to the Bishop de la Bere, of their

fear of the relations of the women, that is, of the persistence of the tribal rule. It was this that proved too strong for even the power of the Latin Church, and which saved and preserved this marked feature of the Celtic clergy.

The existence of several priests at one place, an obvious survival of the monastic system, and those priests often married men with families, led to the formation of very remarkable and interesting ecclesiastical societies, such as did not exist elsewhere. These societies may explain a term that has long been a puzzle to Welsh church historians, "*Glaswir*", or "*Eglwyswir*", churchmen, who, it is admitted, formed an ecclesiastical body attached to a church; but who and what such bodies were, is a matter of dispute, and one on which writers are not agreed. It has been conjectured[1] that they were the Celtic monks, and, to some extent, the conjecture seems accurate. They were the monks attached to the different churches or settlements who carried on the business of the Church in the different localities, and who, from being associated by living together, soon became formed into distinct ecclesiastical groups. The fact of the existence of these groups seems to explain the reason for the foundation of the so-called colleges by Bishop Bec (1280–1296). "What," asks Archdeacon Bevan "were the objects these collegiate churches were designed to serve?"[2] He, however, fails to give any satisfactory answer, beyond the reason stated in the foundation charter of Abergwilli that the parts of "*Ystrad Tywy*, hitherto places of misery, should be changed into places of spiritual joy". He confesses it is not easy to explain in what way the withdrawal of the clergy from the parochial churches could conduce to the spiritual benefit of the parishioners. This

[1] *Jones and Freeman*, pp. 255, 310. [2] *Diocesan Hist. St. David's*, p. 127.

statement, however, assumes the whole case, that there were then parochial clergy in Wales—a statement which has yet to be proved. The explanation submitted here is that Bec found at different churches, notably at Llangadoc and Llanddewibrefi, bodies of clergy whose object in life he did not understand, and, Norman-like, desirous of bringing the diocese into order, resolved to organize these groups. Knowing little and caring less about their origin, he determined to bring them under the Latin rule. To bring about this purpose, he organized, or founded, two so-called collegiate bodies, that is, bodies regulated by the rules of the Latin Church. Bec was merely applying a process that had often been applied before; he was merely maintaining existing institutions under new rules. In England the Latin Church had brought the old monasteries under the rule of St. Benedict in this way. Here Bec found irregular groups of clergy that could not be accounted for or managed satisfactorily, so he did what would be done at the present day, he reorganized these bodies on what he considered a rational basis. Probably Bec's reform was at the time a beneficial one, as he utilized, or tried to utilize, groups of men that were apparently, if not useless, of very little use. Although there is no evidence that such was the case, it is most probable that he was but carrying out the policy Archbishop Peckham had ordered[1] to be carried out in the diocese of St. Asaph, in getting rid of the groups of persons, portionists as they are called, tribesmen, as is more correct, who lived on the benefices. Peckham was determined to break up this system, and it is not unlikely it is due to his instructions to this effect, that Bec acted. It is true that the date of the foundation of Abergwilli was 1283, and Peckham's visitation of St. David's was

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 564.

not till 1284, but Llanddewibrefi was not founded until 1287. The political necessity for preventing groups of clergy, who were probably strong patriots, combining, or aiding others to combine, in a national movement against Edward, had doubtless its effect in inducing the bishop to obtain control over these groups of men by reorganizing them into colleges. It is said by Archdeacon Bevan,[1] that the result of these collegiate churches was disaster to the Welsh Church; if this is so, it is only another instance of the many that we meet with in Welsh ecclesiastical history, of the failure of the Latin attempts to substitute their system for the native Celtic. The history of these colleges is very interesting and instructive, as it marks almost the final step of the Latin Church to uproot the Celtic. At first, Bernard and his successors were too much occupied with establishing themselves at St. David's, and perfecting their organization, to take much concern with the Celtic clergy. Other causes helped to delay any great interference with them, such as rebellions, and disputes as to jurisdiction; but Edward's conquest of Wales, and Peckham's active interference, must have led the archbishop to see the time had come for perfecting the Latin organization and developing their ecclesiastical system, that is, effacing the remaining distinctive marks of the Celtic Church. Peckham's visitation was most likely undertaken for this purpose, and the new civil settlement of the country was probably to be followed by a new ecclesiastical settlement. In North Wales, Edward had endeavoured to arrive at an ending of disputes with the monastery of Aberconway, the bishop of Bangor, and the *Offeyriat Teulu*, the priests of the household, probably the tribe of the Saint, for the monastery of Bangor. Edward granted[2] certain vills to the bishop

[1] *History of St. David's*, p. 128. [2] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 550.

and priests jointly, in lieu of certain tithes they gave up. The great importance of the grant is, that it treats the priests of the household, the tribe of the Saint, as a body capable of holding property, and of holding on an equal footing with the bishop. It follows from this that the Welsh ecclesiastical tribes must have survived, with some organization and with some authority, until the conquest of Wales by Edward I. It is therefore plain that there existed a group of persons who were entitled to hold property, who possessed certain rights, and who were either the remains of the tribe of the Saint, or that body in another form, the remains of the old Welsh monastic clergy. Here, we find certain ecclesiastical groups that had to be reckoned with, and it is not unlikely the way that this was done was that which Bec followed, of creating collegiate churches.

The suppression, or the conversion, into colleges of the remains of the Celtic monastic clergy, of necessity paved the way for the Latin system of parochial clergy.

The fact that the Welsh clergy only gradually became a parochial clergy according to Latin ideas, goes far to explain some of the anomalies and peculiarities connected with the Welsh Church. As far as possible, a Welsh incumbent, after the changes that followed on Peckham's visitation, would try to keep the power he had been accustomed to exercise, and would use but sparingly the new ideas and notions he was told he possessed. As he had been independent, he would naturally object to becoming dependent. But if he was to become a parochial priest, submission to his superior, and obedience to those in authority, were essential; hence it may be taken that the parochial system met with considerable difficulty in making its way in Wales, and it probably was not until after the legislation of Henry VIII that it really became,

for all purposes, an integral part of the organization of the country.

It is a question of some importance and interest, What were the orders in the Celtic Church, did they possess all the orders of the Latin? As to the three higher orders—bishops, priests, and deacons—it seems clear that they did, but with regard to minor orders, it is not so clear. As the Church increased, the Latin Church created a number of officers connected with the Church, such as acolytes, lectors, exorcists, doorkeepers—all of whom received orders from the bishop, and upon all of whom the same rules as to the receipt of orders were as binding as in the case of the superior orders. It is not clear to what extent these officers existed in the Celtic Church, or how far minor orders prevailed. It would seem, from the *Liber Landavensis*, that they existed to some extent. In the *Senchus Mor* there is a passage speaking of the right of succession to the abbacy, where it is said, with something like scorn, that if he was the next in succession a psalm singer should have the abbacy,[1] and a psalm singer would thus seem to have been, at the time the passage was written, if not the lowest, at least one of the lowest officers in the monastery.

This, therefore, implies that there were certain minor clerical offices, or minor orders, recognized in the Celtic Church, besides the superior orders of bishops, priests, and deacons. This is further borne out by the *Book of Llandaff*, assuming the charters in it are genuine. It mentions a synod of "omnes clericos usque ad inferiores gradus";[2] another of "clericos omnes de majoribus gradibus usque ad inferiores gradus";[3] and at another, "omnibus clericis de majori gradu usque ad inferiorem".[4]

[1] Rolls ed., iii, 73.
[2] *Liber Landavensis*, 223.
[3] *Liber Landavensis*, 234.
[4] *Ibid.*, 248.

But even if this is so, it leaves an important question unanswered: Had the term orders, as applied to minor orders, the same meaning in the Celtic and Latin Churches, or were the officers spoken of merely monastic officers, and not in orders at all? It might well be that some of the officials were officers of the monastery, but never had or desired to have orders, and it is by no means certain that this was not the case. As has been already pointed out, the fact of holding a monastic office gave a title to orders, but it does not necessarily follow that because a monastic official could be ordained that he therefore was, and that such official was in orders. So far as the Welsh laws go, there is little evidence of minor orders, and there does not seem to have been any extra penalty for killing a person who held these offices, than for killing any one else, and this is the great test. While with existing evidence it is not possible to say with certainty whether or not minor orders existed, yet if they did not, the reason why they did not can easily be given; it was because the persons doing the duties were officials of the monastery, and this again would be one of the results that would follow from a monastic as opposed to a parochial clergy.

As has already been stated, it would be unfair to the Celtic clergy to take the Welsh canons, or any other set of penal laws, as a basis from which to draw a sketch of the habits and customs of the clergy of the time. It by no means follows that because the criminal law prohibits an offence, that offence is often committed. Laws are made, especially laws in early societies, to meet cases that may arise, but not, by any means, to meet cases that have arisen. The early Welsh canons have, however, a value apart from this purely criminal aspect. They bring out clearly that the Celtic clergy consisted of

bishops, priests, and deacons, as the penalties for the same offence vary according as to whether they have been committed by bishop, priest, or deacon. In speaking of monk, reader, and sub-deacon, they also show the monastic character of the Church, these persons usually being members of the monastery. If any inference was to be drawn from the Welsh canons, it would not be favourable to the character of the Celtic clergy, but it is to be borne in mind that the penalties directed by the Welsh laws are not, as a rule, so much against any particular act, as against the act being done either against certain individuals or in certain places. This furnishes a very strong argument in favour of the genuineness of these canons, they in fact agree with the Welsh laws of the date which these canons purport to be. Neither in the laws nor the canons are acts prohibited because they are illegal and wrong, but because property requires protection, and it is the duty of the law and those who administer the law to protect it. For instance, by them, murder, wounding, and assaults are not crimes; they are all injuries to property, for which so much has to be paid. In some cases, the punishment is greater on the wrong-doer in accordance with his position in life, but this appears to be rather a matter of discipline than of legal punishment. The monastic rules were severe, but the penalties in many cases were more in the nature of fines than of personal penance.

The inference to be drawn, as to the Welsh clergy, from the canons, is to some extent borne out by the information we get as to the Celtic clergy from other sources. Gildas gives what is, probably, the earliest, and is certainly, in some respects, the worst picture of the state of things. He hated the Welsh, and did not care to depict them in too bright colours. But Gildas wrote in so

rhetorical a style, and so obviously tried to represent matters with a view to effect, more than to accuracy, that too much reliance must not be placed on him. "Sacerdotes habet Britannia sed insipientes; quam plurimos ministros, sed impudentes; clericos, sed raptores subdolos."[1] This style shows that Gildas is trying to work up the contrast for the sake of effect, and this is done throughout the chapter. Gluttonous, immoral, dishonest,—such are some of the features which Gildas assigns to the clergy. He accuses them of simony, a vice that would not have been expected, alleging that they purchased the office of bishop or priest; it may well be that they only paid the ordinary fees on receiving the office: all this makes the value of Gildas' testimony doubtful. But, after making every allowance, still this fact remains, that Gildas, the canons of the Welsh synods, and the Welsh laws, all draw a dark picture of the Welsh clergy. Their chief offences are crimes of violence and immorality. In that age it must be remembered that crimes of violence were not considered of very great importance. The attempt, the vain attempt of Patrick, to make the Irish regard homicide as a crime, and its utter failure, is a strong proof of this. It must also be borne in mind that the crimes which Gildas ascribes to the Welsh clergy are exactly the crimes and offences that it is reasonable to suppose would be found in bodies of men scattered about the country, forming separate independent communities, without superiors and without control. The members of such bodies would almost of necessity quarrel with the members of other similar bodies, or with laymen they might meet. A priest, living alone in a district, whether married or single, would, for the sake of his own safety, abstain from many of the acts imputed to the clergy. The acts alleged are far more like

[1] Gildas, *Epistolæ*, c. 66; *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 71.

the acts of a band of lawbreakers than the acts of any individual. It is by no means improbable that one of the religious community, at the head of the servants and retainers of the settlement, might either avenge an act or make reprisals, which would have been quite out of the power of any single parish priest. As, for instance, the first canon, the one which Haddan and Stubbs cite as a proof of their Welsh origin, states "If any one commit wilful murder let him pay three female and three male slaves".[1] It is hardly likely that in an ordinary case a Welsh clergyman would possess such a household as would supply three male and three female slaves. But, if he was a member of a religious settlement, that body would probably be quite a large enough slave owner to make the payment of such a penalty a matter of but little difficulty. It is not contended that the Welsh clergy were in any way an immaculate body of men; but what is contended is, that the offences alleged against them in the Welsh canons point far more to the offences that men who are members of an armed community would commit than to offences that would be done by individuals. Morally, the guilt may be the same, but in judging of the criminality of a class such circumstances require to be considered before arriving at a determination.

It is probably, as has already been stated, to Archbishop Peckham's influence that a great change in the customs and habits of the Welsh clergy was brought about. Up to his time no real attempt had been made to alter the condition of things that prevailed among the country clergy. On the breaking out of the Welsh war of 1282 Edward I wrote to Peckham ordering him to excommunicate the Welsh rebels (*malefactores Wallenses*). The Archbishop then wrote to his suffragans, ordering

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 127.

them, by virtue of the obedience they owed to the see of Canterbury, to excommunicate the Welsh rebels, and this order was sent to all the Canterbury suffragans, except Hereford. Annian, Bishop of St. Asaph, refused to obey; he was summoned to Canterbury to answer to the Archbishop, and his diocese handed over to Robert Burnell, Bishop of Bath and Wells. Complaints were made by Llewellyn of the way the English burnt churches and killed ecclesiastics. On Llewellyn's death, Peckham took steps to reorganize the churches in Wales. In the diocese of St. David's no less than 38 churches were forfeited to the Crown. These were granted by the King to Bishop Bec, and he appropriated some of them to the prebends of St. David's and to his colleges. Such a state of things must have altered the condition of matters ecclesiastical in Wales. Another means was found. The ordination of Welshmen, except to the lowest orders, was forbidden, "Item nullus Wallensis aliquem filium suum ad aliquos ordines promovebit nisi unum; et hos ad primam tonsuram tantum",[1] and this prohibition was renewed later, in 1322, by Archbishop Reynolds, who rejected Celts (Irish, Welsh, and Scotch clergy) unless upon great necessity, and after special enquiry into the individual case. This must have led to the increase of the Latin clergy. To enforce Latin rules, Bec ordered that synods should be held in his diocese three times a year, Michaelmas, Christmas, and Easter, the statute stating that up till then synods had not been held.[2] A diocesan synod was also held in Bangor.[3] The Crown claimed, and enforced its right, to the temporalities of the Welsh sees *sede vacante*.[4] All this shows the rigorous attempts that were made on the death of Llewellyn to stamp out the Celtic Church in Wales.

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 583.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 588.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 597.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 598.

The wonder is not that the Latin Church succeeded, but that so much has survived of the Welsh. If ever a Church felt the iron hand of a conqueror it was the Welsh Church during the rule of Edward I and his Archbishop Peckham, and from this period the ascendency of the Latin church is to be ascribed.

Another irregularity as to the Celtic clergy, from a Latin point of view, was the means by which discipline over them was maintained. This is a question that it is most difficult to understand if seen from the Latin side. As has been already stated, bishops in Wales existed from a very early period, but they were monastic bishops. The existence of Episcopacy does not necessarily imply the existence of a diocese, still less of territorial jurisdiction. If the view here put forward, that the clergy were a monastic body, is the right one, the difficulty disappears, for the clergy would be under the jurisdiction of the abbot and the other monastic officials. Doubtless in some of the distant colonies the discipline would be lax, as was the case in the distant cells of the Latin monasteries, but whatever was the result in practice, in theory the discipline existed. It is well known that the Latin system was based on a territorial division of the country, the unit being the parish under the charge of a single priest. So many parishes made up a rural deanery; so many rural deaneries an archdeaconry; so many archdeaconries a diocese. It is important to consider if any such system is to be found in Wales before the Norman conquest, for, if it existed, although this would not prove the monastic theory to be wrong, yet it would go far to prove it was only the exception, and that the Latin Church discipline existed in Wales from a much earlier date than has been assumed in these pages to be the case.

In the *Dimetian Code*, an archdeacon of Llandaff,

Blegywryd, is mentioned.[1] He is said to have gone with Hywel Da and the Welsh bishops to Rome, to Pope Anastasius, to read over the laws, and that Blegywryd composed some verses in Latin in honour of the event. It must be admitted that the composition of verses on such an occasion is what a Welsh bard would have done, but it is probable they would have been in Welsh, not Latin. Beyond the statement in the *Dimetian Code*, there is nothing to show who Blegywryd was, or what was his office. Nowhere else in the Welsh codes does the mention of an archdeacon occur, nor are his duties in any way defined. The passage looks suspicious; being in the *Dimetian Code*, it appears as if it was inserted there to magnify Llandaff. No similar entry occurs in the *Liber Landavensis*, nor is there in it any mention of an archdeacon of Llandaff. No similar entry occurs in the *Gwentian Code*. The dates as given, differ from the dates given in the *Brut y Tywysogion*,[2] which makes the death of Hywel Da 926, not 940, as here. Lumbert, bishop of Menevia, who is said to have been present, is the mysterious prelate whose episcopate is stated to have lasted seventy years, and it is remarkable that bishops of Bangor and St. Asaph are both said to be present, but no bishop of Llandaff, and in place of the bishop the archdeacon appears. According to the *Liber Landavensis*, there was a bishop of Llandaff, Cyfeiliawg, at the time. But the difficulties do not rest here. Blegywryd is described as being a doctor in the law of the emperor and of the church (*doctor ynghyfreith yr amhera6dyr ac ynghyfreith yr egl6ys oed ef*); it is most unlikely that a Welsh scribe would be a doctor, whatever this may be, in civil law. Again, the designation of archdeacon is not given to Blegywryd in all the MSS. of the *Dimetian*

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 342, 343. [2] Rolls ed., p. 21.

Code. In a MS. in the Bodleian, he is merely called "clericus doctorum". Whatever may be the true explanation, whether it is an interpolation, or whether it was inserted to keep up the dignity of Llandaff, the passage is of too doubtful a nature to enable an inference to be safely drawn that an officer, called an archdeacon, exercising territorial jurisdiction, existed in Wales in the tenth century. It must also be remembered that the code uses ecclesiastical titles very loosely; it speaks of an archbishop of Menevia, when there was no such person; as, afterwards, it speaks of the bishop, thus describing the same person, Lumbert, by the two titles, bishop and archbishop. It is the most probable explanation, that the copyist of the *Dimetian Code* was very desirous of magnifying the glories of Menevia and underrating Llandaff, so he spoke of the archbishop of the one, and the archdeacon of the other. What makes it still more probable that no archdeacon in the Latin sense was to be found, is the fact that the archdeacon was the executive officer of the bishop; in the tenth and eleventh centuries the bishops of Llandaff were most fond of exercising criminal jurisdiction over Welsh princes, if the records in the *Book of Llandaff* are to be trusted; but yet there is no trace there of any such an official as an archdeacon. One of the few dated charters in the *Liber Landavensis*, one of 955,[1] relates a quarrel between a deacon and a countryman named Merchiter, which ended in the deacon killing the countryman, and taking refuge in a church. The friends of the countryman tried to break open the church, and arrest the deacon. The bishop forbade them doing it, as it was a crime; they persisted, and slew the deacon before the altar. On this being reported to the bishop, he sent, not to his official,

[1] *Book of Llandaff*, 210.

the archdeacon, as he would have done if he had been a Latin bishop, and had an archdeacon, not to his own court, but to all the *monasteries* (*monasteria*)—the expression is significant—of all the provinces in his diocese subject to the church of Llandaff, to assemble the priests, deacons, and clergy of all degrees. A synod was held; the Welsh prince gave up the murderers, who were imprisoned, and had to pay a fine and give lands to the defiled church, and the offenders and their possessions were handed over to the Llandaff monastery. The witnesses were the bishop, a priest, and a reader, and eight others, probably monks. Although a Blegywryd is mentioned in it, and eight others, probably monks, as they are among the laity, no mention is made of any archdeacon, and it is hard to believe if such a functionary existed why he did not appear on such an occasion. There is also another point. In the charter, Bledcuirit, son of Anion, is mentioned as "the celebrated Blegywryd", and he is said,[1] with what truth is doubtful, to be the same person as the writer of the laws. In the next charter, among the laymen who are witnesses to it, occurs the name of Blegywryd, the son of Anion. In the *Myvyrian Archaiology*, he is called the chief assessor (*pencyfeistedd*) at Llandaff. But whatever he may have been, he is only called archdeacon in this one passage in the *Dimetian Code*; wherever else he appears it is as a layman. And even the *Dimetian Code* leads to the inference that, except that an archdeacon must be in orders, Blegywryd was a layman, as it is said that out of the assembly Hywel selected twelve of the wisest laics to form the laws, and the most learned scholar in all Cymru to write the laws . . . and Blegywryd was the clerk. That no archdeacon, in the Latin sense, existed in Wales before

[1] *Book of Llandaff*, 209, and in 476, note 1.

the Norman conquest, is, to a great extent admitted by Archdeacon Bevan, who says that the office was due to Bernard, the first Norman bishop of St. David's, or rather, that there is evidence that it then existed.[1] This may be so, but the point urged here is, that there is no evidence of their existence before the time of Bernard. Bevan also admits[2] that unless the term *archoffeiriad* applies to rural deans, there is no evidence of the existence of such officials. Even if it does mean rural dean, which is most doubtful, it does not take the office back before the time of Bernard, as the first *archoffeiriad* met with is Jevan of Llanbadarn, who died 1136.[3] It therefore appears that two of the great items of the Latin system of Church discipline, archdeacon and rural dean, are wanting, and it is hard to see how the system could be worked without them, as it was on them it mainly rested.

The evidence as to the existence of the next stage in the Latin system, the parish, is also most inconclusive; the question will be considered more fully in the next chapter—here, it will suffice to state the conclusion of Rees on the point[4]: "The idea that parishes in Wales were established by any general Act of Parliament can never be maintained; they existed in the times of Welsh independency, when no Act of the English Parliament could affect them. The Welsh annals record no ordinance for these arrangements which, in the state of the country, divided between contending princes, was absolutely impossible." Without assenting to all the statements in this passage, it may be admitted that the Celtic state of Wales before the Norman conquest was such as to have made any system of ecclesiastical organization or church

[1] *Diocesan History of St. David's*, 64.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Brut y Tywysogion*, Rolls ed., 160.
[4] *Welsh Saints*, 21.

government, such as prevailed in the Latin Church, an impossibility. The ecclesiastical dignitaries were unknown to the Celts, and were brought into Wales in the trains of the Norman conquerors. The church system of the Celts was a series of monastic colonies, under the government and control of the mother house, and the inmates of the colonies were under the same authority and subject to the same discipline as the inmates of the mother house itself. There was always difficulty in the application of this rule in practice. Giraldus tells a story of a Benedictine monk in a Welsh cell of the Abbey of Gloucester, who, on being recalled to the monastery and taken to service there in the great abbey of St. Peter's, was so lost in wonder at what the monks were doing that he could not believe he belonged to the same body. It is probable that the story would apply with equal truth and equal force to the colonies of the early Celtic monasteries. It is by no means clear who the *archoffeiriad* was, and what were his duties; the term is usually met with, not as describing an officer having territorial powers or exercising territorial jurisdiction, but in connection with some of the monastic colonies, and it may well be that it designated the head of the clergy who made up the colony, the local chief of the tribe or sub-tribe of the saint. The term "arch", when used by the Celts, has by no means the same meaning as the term has in modern parlance. With us the term "arch" implies pre-eminence, and so the rule of a superior over subordinates, as archbishop and archdeacon. This was also the Latin use of the word. But the Celt used the term not to imply pre-eminence, but distinction, arch-priest being a celebrated priest, the celebrity being personal, not derived from any office or place, not a priest with any jurisdiction or rule over others. Thus the term might be applied to one man and would not be to his successors.

David and Teilo in this sense were archbishops, but their successors were not. An instance of this use of the word is found in the well-known description of the Seven Bishops' Houses (*escobity*). Menevia is described as *Eistedua arbennic*,[1] not, as is often said, *the* chief seat in Wales, but *a* chief, in the sense of a noted or famous residence in Wales. In the *Leges Wallice* the passage runs "sedes principalis in Cambria".[2]

Among the Celtic clergy the highest positions were those of the abbots of the more important houses, such as Menevia or Llandaff, but next to them the highest in rank were not found among the clergy, but in the twenty-four great officers of the Court who were attendant on the king. Of these, the first was the chief of the household (*Pennteulu*); the second was the priest of the household (*offeiriat teulu*).[3] These seem to have represented the old tribal chief and the tribal priest. The priest sat next the server to bless the food and chaunt the pater,[4] probably a survival of the time when he had to perform magic rites. The priest was the third; this indispensable person was entitled to food and clothing from the king, his lodgings were in the house of the chaplain, and the scholars lodged with him.[5] This passage seems to point to two things, (1) that there was attached to the Court a kind of religious, it might almost be said monastic, establishment, and that at the head of this was the chief ecclesiastic about the Court. The house of the chaplain, a tribesman, was the residence of this personage. Probably this was a survival of the time when the Celtic chief was surrounded by the magicians and sorcerers; these the Christians had supplanted, and in their place the king was, on becoming a Christian, surrounded with monks. As Pagans, their duty had been

[1] *Ancient Laws*, i, 557. [2] *Ibid.*, ii, 790. [3] *Ibid.*, i, 345.
[4] *Ibid.*, i, 11. [5] *Ibid.*, i, 17.

by their magic arts to ward off danger from the king; as Christians, it was the same, but the means used were different. When Pagans, the kings were protected by magic; when Christians, by prayer. The former was done by the Druid, the latter by the king's chaplain. The monks took the place of the Druids, and probably with the place many of the customs and observances. The position the priest of the household held was peculiar. For nearly all other persons the payment they would receive on being injured was fixed by law, but in this case it was fixed on each occasion by the synod.[1] In most cases a man knew, or could easily ascertain, what he would have to pay for an act of violence, but in the case of the priest of the household it had to be fixed by ecclesiastics for an ecclesiastic. As head of the royal monastic colony he was practically the royal chaplain, and independent of all control. He was entitled to a third of the king's tithes, and the third was not confined to tithes, but extended to everything pertaining to the Court, and could be taken from all persons. The king's chaplain was entitled to claim a third of everything the people about the Court received. Probably this was, in its origin, the payment for the magic charms and arts of the Druid; when the Court became Christian, the Druid's successor claimed the same payment for doing the same work, although he used other means to do it.

Another relic of the tribal idea is to be found in the rights of the priest of the household. All the chapels of the king were, or had been, served by monks, that is, the monks about the king's court. They were under the control, not of the king, but of the head of their own tribe, the priest of the household, and it was provided that "the bishop was not to present any one to the king's chapels without the permission of the priest of the house-

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 19.

hold, except by the advice of the king".[1] That is, that according to the Celtic idea, the bishop had no right to interfere in the monastery attached to the Court, and if he tried to do so it was only possible with the direct sanction of the king. As successor of the heathen priests, as chief of the tribe of the saint, as head of the royal monastery, the priest of the household was in a position of great influence and importance. But it seems that his jurisdiction was only over his own monks, and did not extend further—he had no authority outside his own religious establishment; there, he was supreme. His power was all monastic; there was nothing personal connected with it. He was not the only great ecclesiastic at Court, for next to the head of the king's monks came the queen's priest of the household, but he was probably only an official of the Court monastery, for it is said in the code that his lodgings were to be with the king's priest, in the house of the chaplain.[2] Here, again, is another instance of the survival of the old idea. All the priests in the Royal monastery are only the Druids under another name, performing the old duties but practising new modes of doing them.

This survival of the old idea is a good illustration of what Celtic Christianity really was, and how it operated; only the name and mode of working were altered, not the position occupied by the priests.

It may be imagined, from what has been stated, that the Celtic clergy were by no means a class of which the Celtic Church had reason to be proud, but this would hardly be doing them justice. It is probable that they were no better nor no worse than other clergy of those times. Doubtless their discipline was lax. In the absence of a strong central authority it was impossible for it to be otherwise; but passing over the question of discipline it

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 19. [2] *Ibid.*, 53.

does not seem that the Celtic clergy were any worse than their neighbours. Gildas, it is true, paints them in very black colours, but it is obvious that Gildas wrote for effect, and did not hesitate to use strong language, if he thought that such use in any way enhanced the beauty of his book. If the text of the canons was taken as a description of the Welsh clergy it would seem that they were ignorant of no form of vice, but to do this would be as unfair as to say, after reading our criminal law, what a wicked people the English must be, as they practised such a terrible series of offences as are thereby made punishable.

What we find as to the Celtic clergy is, that there were groups of ecclesiastics, varying in number according to special circumstances, who transacted the business of religion as if it belonged to them, and to them alone. They were not subject to very severe discipline; their system did not admit of it; they did not work very energetically, as there was no need for them to do so. What they did do was to carry on the religious rites of the tribe which had been previously done by the Pagan priests, altered and modified, so far as was necessary to carry out the change from Paganism to Christianity, and no further. All bodies of men, when the system under which they live has become crystallized, are not usually capable of very great sacrifice, and this was the condition of the Celtic clergy. Their place in the state or tribe being fixed by their birth, they had no reason for exertion; members of the tribe of the Saint, they were entitled, as of right, to share in the property of the tribe, which, like the property of the lay tribe, was held in common. If they were destined for greatness it would come to them, if not, they would not by their own efforts attain to it. To us, the worst part of their organization was the position of the women: to our ideas, the relations of the Celtic clergy

with women were very immoral and very bad. They did not think so. With them marriage was not, and had never been, regarded as a necessary ceremony. Among no Celtic nation has personal purity ever been considered an essential virtue. The difference in the right to succession of the legitimate and illegitimate children of a tribesman was but slight, when the parents were members of the same tribe; it was only when to illegitimacy was added the fact that the child was the offspring of a non-tribesman that difficulties arose. It is not fair to apply to a primitive people our modern ideas on morality, even if, when all is told, our morality is in fact superior to theirs. Whether the effect of the Celtic customs was, or was not, for the good of the country, is a point on which it is unsafe to dogmatize, and upon which opinions may well differ. But their customs must be taken into account when an attempt is made to consider what the Welsh clergy were in fact. The strength of a church is its clergy, and, at the first blush, it seems hard to see how the Celtic clergy, if the description given of them is accurate, could be a source of strength to any people. Yet it is as clear as any historical fact can be that this very clergy formed one of the chief obstacles in the struggle against Rome, and were the chief impediment to Roman conquests. The strength of the clergy lay, not in their piety, not in their religious work, not in their holy lives, but in the fact that they represented, and faithfully represented, the tribal system which was irrevocably bound up in the Welsh idea of Christianity—a monastic church with monastic settlements all over the country, representing the tribe of the Saint, continuing the traditions, practising the rites, believing the beliefs, and performing the ceremonies of their ancestral faith and paternal habits. It was not that the clergy changed or reformed the

religious system, they only modified it just as much and no more than was necessary to meet the changed state of things, and suit the popular wants. Never has there been so intensely national a church, and never has a church been more ready than the Celtic to make itself national. If a high opinion of the clergy is not formed, it must be borne in mind that they had but little opportunity of showing what they could do, beyond the fact of their unswerving loyalty to a system which they maintained for some centuries, and which required the use of all the power of the Latin Church to conquer, even if it can be truly said that she ever really conquered the Celtic Church.

CHAPTER VII.

CHURCHES.

The difference between the Latin and the Celtic systems of religious organization is brought into strong relief when the rules that apply to the different classes of churches are considered. To the Latin, the country was parcelled out into a series of divisions of irregular size, to each of which a church was attached, and to which church all the inhabitants of the district belonged. This division, the parish, was the unit of the ecclesiastical organization of the country, and by far the greater number of the churches in countries where the Latin rule held, or holds, sway, are parish churches. It is true, other churches existed, such as cathedrals, collegiate churches, the chapels to great institutions, and also chapels subordinate to the churches, but all these were the exception; the rule was, that a church was the church of some territorial area, the parish to which all the parishioners belonged, and to which, as of right, they had the power to go, and from which they could only be excluded by the sentence of some competent court. The Latin theory was that every place, except the few extra-parochial places, was in some parish, that every man was a parishioner of some parish, and had, as such, a right to attend the parish church, to have the benefit of its services and the ministrations of its priests. The Celtic idea was quite different; they knew nothing of territorial divisions, nothing of the

necessity for each individual to belong to some church. Their notion was not that the country was parcelled out into ecclesiastical or other divisions, but that it was part of the territory of the different tribes; each tribe had its two divisions, the tribe of the land, and the tribe of the Saint. On its share of the tribal land, the tribe of the Saint erectedthe necessary buildings; one of which was a church to which all the members of the tribe of the Saint could attend, not because they dwelt within a limited area, but because they were members of the tribe, and so had all the rights of the tribe. The distinction so often pointed out in these pages, that the basis of Latin Christianity was territorial, the basis of the Celtic Christianity was tribal, fully accounts for this divergence of view. The difference of ideas naturally led to conflicts, and the absence of parishes may well have been one of the causes that enabled the conflict between the two churches to be so stubbornly fought out.

One of the great principles of the parochial system was that whatever was the size of the parish, whether large or small, whatever was its position or importance, *inter se*, all parishes were equal. It might be that one parish was, for some special reason, of more importance than its neighbour, but this did not in law affect it. The legal idea was that all parishes were equal. The ideas that prevailed in the Celtic Church were very different; there was no notion of equality; all the churches were colonies of some one of the great monasteries, and their importance and rank varied—first in respect of the importance of the monastery of which they were colonies, next, in respect of the position the church occupied in the tribe of the Saint. The division into parishes came later, certainly not before the Norman conquest; indeed, it is very doubtful if it was completely established in Wales until the legislation of

Henry VIII. The churches were all the offshoots of, or dependants upon, some monastery, which was the mother church of its offshoots or colonies, the head of which, the abbot, was the chief of the tribe of the Saint. All churches were settlements, or colonies, from some one of the monasteries, and belonged to the monastery in the sense that they were offshoots from it, and were originally served by a group of monks belonging to it. It is in this sense that they are said to be churches of the Saint who had been the founder of, or the head of the monastery. It was not that the churches were *dedicated* to any particular saint, dedication, in the modern sense of the term, was not then known to the Celtic Church. It was not that the builder of the church selected the saint under whose tutelage he desired it should be placed, it was that the land on which the churches were built, had been acquired by bands of missionary monks, belonging to the original monastery, on behalf of the monastery; it belonged to it, and so, when on that land a church was built, the church was called after the monastery to which the land had been granted, or after some of the saints of the monastery. Thus the Teilo churches were all built on land which had been granted, or which was alleged to have been granted, to the monastery of Llandaff; the Dewi churches on lands that belonged to, or were claimed by, the monastery of St. David's. If a church was called by the name of a saint, it did not imply, as has been assumed, that the saint had founded it, or that it was dedicated to him by the founder. It merely implied that the church was built on land that had become by grant or otherwise the property of the monastery to which the saint belonged. If evidence is required of this, the *Book of Llandaff* gives abundant proof. The charters that are contained in it, and which

are there inserted to prove the title of the monastery of Teilo to its colonies, almost invariably record, not the building of a church and its dedication to St. Teilo, but the grant of land to the monastery of Llandaff. The church came afterwards, and was called after the name of the saint of the monastery. Whether the charters in the *Book of Llandaff* are genuine or not is of little moment for this purpose; their importance is that they show the form the gifts of lands to monasteries took. Having acquired the land, the monastery proceeded to colonize it, and it was then that churches were built, and were called by the name of the saint of the monastery to prove that the land was part of the possessions of the monastery. This is proved by a fact that caused some difficulty to the older school of Welsh antiquaries. David is now said to be the national saint of Wales: yet in the whole of North Wales there is not a single church or chapel built before the beginning of this century that is called after him. In the modern diocese of Llandaff there are only eight of his churches, and three in the diocese of Hereford, while in the diocese of St. David's there are no less than forty-two. To any one considering these figures it would seem that so far from David being the national saint of Wales he was really the saint of the diocese of St. David's. Allowing for the changes of boundaries that have been made from time to time in the St. David's diocese, it seems likely that originally nearly all the churches that bore the name of David were in the diocese of St. David's. How, then, is it that the churches that bear the name of the national saint are only to be found in this one part of Wales? The answer to this question is obvious, if the monastic view is adopted. Grants of land to the St. David's monastery were only given to the monks from that monastery who made the colony, in places where the tribe

of the land were either the descendants of Ceredig or connected with them, or under their influence. Thus, the Dimetiæ would, speaking roughly, be found in the area now included in the diocese of St. David's; so in this area David churches would be expected, and here it is, and here alone, that David churches are found. As the Menevian missionaries did not work outside these limits, confining themselves to tribes either of their own blood, or who were on friendly terms with them, Dewi churches would not be found beyond these limits. The range of Dewi churches is, therefore, coterminous with the missionary labours of the St. David's monks. This is what we find to be the case, and the monastic theory furnishes the only reasonable solution of the difficulty.

Other solutions have been offered. Rees[1] says of the Dewi churches that their foundation "is popularly ascribed to David himself", but this is a view which he does not consider can be accepted in its entirety; only that the more important of the churches were so, while the chapels dependent on them were not actually founded by the saint whose name they bear,[2] but were dedicated to the memory of the saint. Archdeacon Bevan states the fact that there are no churches dedicated to David in North Wales, and says, "It is difficult to account for this on any other ground than that the intercourse between the two divisions was very restricted, but whether this restriction was due to tribal or to geographical conditions we are unable to say".[3] This does not do much to meet the difficulty, and it is hard to suggest any view, besides that of the monastic colonies, that really deals satisfactorily with the point. It is quite true that objections can be raised to this view, but the

[1] *Welsh Saints*, p. 45. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[3] *Diocesan History of St. David's*, p. 24.

objections are fewer than to any other solution. That David or Teilo personally founded the churches that bear their names seems very unlikely. It is hard to prove a negative, but if churches founded by Teilo had existed on any of the lands that were subsequently granted to the monastery of Llandaff by the native chiefs, it is very difficult to believe that no mention would have been made of them in some of the charters in the *Liber Landavensis*. If one thing is more clear than another, it is that no church existed on those lands when granted, as, although all kinds and descriptions of property are mentioned, churches are not; and, if a church had existed, it is difficult to see how, in a grant, especially a grant to a monastery, what was the chief building on the land should be persistently ignored. It is therefore but fair to assume that no church existed on the land at the time the grant was made, and the majority of the grants are subsequent in date to the times of David or Teilo. It therefore follows that if, on any of the lands so granted, either Dewi or Teilo churches are found, as is the case, such churches could not have been founded by either of those saints, and it having thus been established that churches called after the saints were not founded by them, the argument of the personal founding of the churches is shown to be fallacious, and some other explanation must be sought for as the reason for the churches being called after the saint. As has been pointed out, that explanation is one of the difficulties in Welsh Church history, and it is suggested that it is most correctly and satisfactorily explained by the view here put forward, that the churches were colonies from the great monasteries, and were called by the name of the great saint of the monastery, or some saint of his family, to show that they belonged to the monastery. In support of this view may be cited a poem of the twelfth

century by Gwynfardd Brycheiniog, composed in honour of David.[1] It sets out the possessions of the saint, representing him as the owner of some twenty churches. It does not point to any other connection but that of actual ownership by the saint.

> "Dewi the Great of Menevia, the wise sage,
> And Dewi of Brefi near the plains,
> And Dewi is the owner of the superb church of Cyfelach,
> Where there is joy and great piety,
> And Dewi owns the choir that is at Meidrym."

Or in Welsh,

> "Dewi mawr Mynyw syw Sywedydd
> A Dewi Brefi gu ei broydd,
> A Dewi bieu balch lan Gyfelach,
> Tli mae morach a mawr grefydd,
> A Dewi bieu Bangeibyr y sydd
> Meidrym, le a'i mynwent i luossydd.'"

Thus it will be seen, in the twelfth century the idea put forward was not dedication, but actual *ownership*, something far more than dedication. If the name of the saint is read as meaning the monastery, it would be difficult to find stronger evidence to show that the Dewi churches were regarded as the property, the actual possessions, of the St. David's monastery.

It is pointed out with great ingenuity by Rees that the Dewi churches do not lie scattered about the country, but are found in *groups*, a point that also goes to strengthen the theory of there being monastic colonies. On a grant of land being obtained, a band of monks were sent out, and a church founded, and if, either from the number of people, or from any other reason, more than one church was necessary, it would, almost as of course, be built. The groups seem to represent what were then considered the needs of the district which had become monastic

[1] Rees, *Welsh Saints*, p. 48, quoting from *Welsh Archaiology*, i, 270.

property. If the churches had been erected in honour of David, they would naturally have been found scattered all over the district, but the remarkable fact is, that the churches are not so scattered, but are grouped in different localities. There is another peculiarity that goes to support the argument. Not only are there a number of churches dedicated to David, but also a number of chapels dependent on the different churches, and if the church is known by the name of a saint, the same saint's name is usually given to the chapels. Rees points out that only one of the chapels bearing the name of David is subject to a church that does not also bear his name, and that exception, Little Dewchurch, is in the diocese of Hereford, not in the limit of Wales of the present day. It therefore follows that it is fairly clear that the chapels were called after the name of the saint of the church on which they were dependent, that is, that they were colonies from the settlements made by the monks on the property of the monastery of which the church formed part. If, therefore, the rule holds with regard to the offshoots from the colony, it is difficult to see why it should not also hold with regard to the colony itself. Exactly the same process was gone through in establishing the chapelries as has been gone through in establishing the churches; and if the result of the one was, that the chapels were called after the churches, the result of the other most probably was, that the churches were called after the monasteries from which they were colonies, and to which they owed their existence.

This view explains fully why it was that the Dewi churches did not practically extend beyond south-west Wales; and, when regarded from this standpoint, it was not to be expected that they should, for no monastic colonies from Menevia would be sent outside the

district to which the influence of that monastery extended. As the national saint of Wales, David had then no existence; but in south-west Wales, as the head of the great monastery of the sons of Cunedda, he was most powerful, and, within the sphere of that influence, colonies rose and flourished, and with colonies, David churches, and with churches, David chapels. Against this view Archdeacon Bevan and others urge that dedications, in our sense of the term, were, even at that early date, known in Wales, and in proof of this are cited the case of churches such as Merthyr Tydvil and Merthyr Cynog, both called after martyrs, and both implying dedication to such martyrs. The answer is obvious; there is no evidence as to when the churches were first called after the martyrs; it well may be not until a time when the dedication to saints had become common. One fact seems clear, that the dedication, in the modern sense of the term, to saints, is of much later date than the churches being called after native saints; that is, that the churches called Dewi or Teilo churches are earlier in date than the churches called after the Virgin, or St. Michael, and that they show the existence of two very different sets of ideas. The David and Teilo churches mark the first stage in the evangelization of the country by missionary colonies from the monastery. Here, there was no idea of placing the church under the protection of any saint, only of showing to which of the Welsh monasteries the church and its surroundings belonged, and from which they were derived. Later came the idea, the very important idea, that the Church should be under the protection of some special saint, and when that idea became prevalent, then, and not till then, dedications began. Probably after the Norman conquest the dedication of the churches became usual. Both the South

Wales cathedrals underwent the process of dedication to Latin saints. The cathedral of St. David's was dedicated to St. Andrew, and after David was canonized in 1121, it was, or had been previously, dedicated to him and to St. Andrew,[1] and in 1120, the cathedral at Llandaff was dedicated to St. Peter.[2] The process that was applied to the cathedrals was also applied to the other churches. In 1155, it is recorded in the *Brut y Tywysogion*,[3] that a church at Meifod, in the diocese of St. Asaph, was dedicated to St. Mary. "It was not long after that, before the church of St. Mary was dedicated (*gyssegrwyt*, this is sometimes translated "consecrated") at Meifod."[4] Had the fact of the dedication to Latin saints been usual at that time, it is not likely that the chronicler would have thought it necessary to record it. In the *Annales Cambriæ*, a much earlier instance, in 718, is recorded of the dedication of a church to St. Michael.[5] This date may therefore be taken as the time when dedications began, and the history of the Welsh churches would run in the following order: Groups of churches called after the different monasteries from which directly they sprang; *e.g.*, the Dewi and Teilo churches, and all the churches called after Welsh monasteries, and belonging to them. These will comprise a considerable number of the churches that bear the names of native saints.

With regard to the Dewi churches, they seem to divide into two classes: what may be called grouped or associated churches, called Dewi, as being colonies of the monastery; and isolated Dewi churches, so dedicated to David after he had become, by his canonization, the only recognized

[1] *Annales Cambriæ*, Rolls ed., p. 39, *sub an.* 1131.

[2] *Liber Landavensis*, p. 83. See also *Browne Willis*, p. 163, who mentions St. Peter and St. Paul.

[3] Rolls ed., p. 185. [4] Rolls ed., p. 185. [5] Rolls ed., p. 9.

Welsh saint, and hence the national saint of Wales. The churches that bear the names of native monastic saints would represent the earliest churches in the country, and give some idea of the extent to which Christianity permeated the country. Then came a second group, dedicated churches, and these may be divided into three great classes—the Michael churches, the Mary churches, and other saints. It may well be that the two entries, the one from the *Annales Cambriæ*, the other from the *Brut y Tywysogion*, as to the Michael and Mary churches, should not be pushed too far, but still it is not unfair to use them as marking the fact that the Michael churches represent the earliest form of dedicated churches. This seems to be generally admitted, and the question is asked, Why should it be so? Why should so many churches dedicated to St. Michael appear in Wales? Archdeacon Bevan makes two guesses as to the reason of Michael's popularity. (1) An association of St. Michael with hills; (2) that something appealed to Welsh sentiment in the significance of the dedication as a symbol of the victorious progress of the church.[1] It may well be that there was another reason. All Celtic people believed greatly in the spirits and powers of darkness. Michael was the saint who, according to Scripture, conquered the spirits of evil, and, as such saint, he would be especially venerated at those places where the evil spirits were subdued. Certain spots which had been sacred to the evil spirits had, by the Christian monks, relying, amongst other things, on the power of Michael, been won over from the evil spirits, and on such spots, where the powers of light triumphed over the powers of darkness, a church was built, and to celebrate the victory the monks had obtained by aid of the victorious saint, the church was

[1] *Diocesan History of St. David's*, p. 36.

called after him; hence, the Michael churches, which would represent old Pagan places of worship which the Christian monks converted into Christian sites for religious worship. Probably, while the churches called after the saint of the monastery were the oldest, the Michael churches came next, and this explains how it was that churches were called after Michael so early as the beginning of the eighth century. This would complete the list of Celtic churches before the Norman conquest: (1) Churches called after the name of the saint who was the chief saint of the monastery, from which the daughter churches owed their origin; (2) churches called after the name of some saint who belonged to the family of the chief saint of the monastery; and (3) churches called after St. Michael to celebrate the victory of the Celtic monks over the powers of darkness. Into one or other of these categories all the churches that were called by the name of any saint must have fallen.

So things went on until the Norman conquest, when the Norman bishops and the Norman clergy introduced a new state of things. The old names were changed, and the churches dedicated to Latin saints, and thus originated the great group of churches dedicated to the Virgin. These Llanfair churches, which form the largest group of this class, probably mark the introduction of a new movement —a further attempt to do away with Celtic ideas and to introduce the Latin system. It is most likely the case that most of the Welsh churches had never been dedicated at all, that is, in the sense of being placed under the protection of some special saint, who was supposed to be the tutelary saint of the place. Invocation of saints was not a matter to which the Celtic Church attached much importance, and they do not seem to have dedicated their churches in the Latin way. When the Latin endeavoured

to establish his ascendancy, one of the means of stamping out the Celtic faith was the abolition of Celtic, and the introduction of Latin saints. A similar state of things had taken place in England; the Saxons complained bitterly, after the conquest, that the Normans refused to recognize the Saxon saints, and denied that they were saints at all, substituting the Latin saints for them, and this process was repeated in Wales. It formed a part of the system by which it was sought to eradicate the Celtic faith and establish the Latin.

It is important to bear these three sets of names for churches in mind, as they point to three distinct ecclesiastical movements in Wales. First, the churches that were the monastic colonies, which dated from the earliest times to the eighth century; then the churches where the victory of the Christians, by aid of St. Michael, over the Pagan forces of evil, were celebrated, the Llanfihangel churches, a group that extended from the eighth to the eleventh century; then, in the twelfth century, the introduction of Latin saints, and the dedication of churches to the Virgin—the Llanfair churches.

One peculiarity as to the Mary churches, and one which bears out the view already stated, is, that a number of the Mary churches are chapels to churches called by the names of Welsh saints, that is, to older churches. Apparently the process was to dedicate a chapel, leaving the mother church untouched, this still bore the name of the monastery from which the colony sprang; while the chapels, it may be for distinction, it may be because there would be less opposition in their case, were called by the names of Latin saints. As the mother church would precede the chapel in date, it follows the monastic colony retained its name in spite of the change, but that the offshoots of the colony, the newer churches, were appro-

priated by the Latins, and called by the names of Latin saints. It is pointed out by Rees[1] that the Mary churches are more numerous in that part of Wales which was occupied by foreigners, and other churches more numerous in that part where the Welsh held their own. For instance, in Pembrokeshire, which was a Flemish colony, the Mary churches are unusually numerous, some twenty-nine out of one hundred and twenty-three. While in the two Welsh districts of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire there are only five and six respectively, the five in Carmarthenshire being all chapels to churches bearing the names of Welsh saints, except Talley, which was a Michael church; while in Cardiganshire, out of the six, two are chapels to churches called after Welsh saints. Many of the Mary churches are also in towns which, as a rule, owe their origin to the Latin conquerors; others are near Norman castles, and others, churches to Cistercian monasteries. It therefore seems to follow that the introduction of the Mary churches was, as has been stated, an attempt of the Latins to get rid of the local saints by whose names the churches were called. There is another feature to be noticed. The churches that formed the monastic colonies seem, from an early date, although known as churches of the monastery, to have also been, for the purpose of distinction or otherwise, called by the names of some other saints. This is clear from a passage in the "Griefs" of Rhys Vychan, who wrote in the reign of Edward I; speaking of the church of Llangadoc, he says:[2] "In the church of David which is called Llangadoc", thereby showing that the church was a settlement from the Menevian monastery, but for some local reason it was called after Cadoc; but this did not alter the proprietary right, it was still a church of the

[1] *Welsh Saints*, p. 33. [2] Cited by Rees, *Welsh Saints*, p. 50.

monastery of St. David's, though it was called the church of Cadoc. Probably a similar reason led to others of the colonies of the St. David's monastery being called by the names of other saints.

The fact that it is probable that the date of the different churches may, to some extent, be seen by reason of the names they bear—the order being, Welsh saints, dedication to St. Michael, dedication to the Virgin, dedication to other Latin saints—gives rise to the next point, the different meanings of the different Welsh words that are usually translated "church"; do these words in any way bear out the conclusion above stated as to the dates of the churches? To some extent it will be found they do. The word "church", has, in Welsh, three, if not four, equivalents, that is, three or four words are translated church; the first, and most common, is "*llan*". Out of the churches and chapels mentioned by Rees as existing in Wales, no less than five hundred and twenty are called *llan*. Newell, speaking of them, says:[1] "Many of these have other and more generally used English names, and some are now extinct; all these mark the site of an old church, and in many of the places named, the second part of the word indicates the saint or saints who are the reputed founders." The last statement as to the founders has already been dealt with; it was not the founder, but the house from which the church sprang, and to which the church belonged, that gave it its name. The *llan* probably denotes the earliest form of ecclesiastical settlement, the monastic colony, sent out by the monastery to take possession of and civilize the district which they had obtained from some local chief as the price of their forgiveness for his sins. In its original meaning the *llan* denotes the enclosure

[1] *History of Welsh Church*, p. 146.

surrounded by a wall or banks, the same as the Irish *rath*. Its primary meaning is the enclosure, the fortified enclosure, which contained the settlement. The churches that are called *llan*, therefore, represent the early settlements from the monasteries. Archdeacon Bevan, it is true, tries to make out a connection between *llan*,[1] which he calls the sacred enclosure, and *planum*, ground prepared for a cemetery; but this is rather to narrow the use of the word *llan*; it was, primarily, any fortified enclosure; then, as the church and churchyard often represented an inner enclosure in the settlement, it was applied to them as the most important form of enclosure, and so, at last, meant the church. If the view that the *llan* is the oldest form of church is correct, it should follow that the majority of the *llans* represented the property of the Celtic religious houses, that is, are called after the saints who were the great saints of the religious houses. Archdeacon Bevan says[2] that there are one hundred and sixty primary churches in the diocese of St. David's, and nearly half are associated with Welsh saints,—twenty-three to David, four to Padarn, five to Cynllo, four to Fraed, ten to Teilo, six to Brynach, five to Cynog, six to Ishmael, and four to Illtyd. All these saints are connected with some one or other of the South Wales monasteries, and almost all the churches that are associated with their names are called "*llan*". Taking the diocese of St. David's, it would therefore appear that the monastic colonies called by the names of the monastic saints, have all traces of their origin—the fortified village—in their names; and all go to prove that the term *llan*, coupled with the name of a native saint, represent the monastic colonies, the early Christian settlements.

The group of Michael churches, of which there are some

[1] *Diocesan History of St. David's*, p. 14. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

forty-five in the diocese of St. David's, form the next in point of time, and mark the spread of Christianity. The village, the *llan*, would probably be a village belonging to the lay tribe, and after much preaching and praying the missionaries got a footing in it. The village was not granted to the monastery, and so did not become part of the possessions of the monastery, and was not entitled to be called by the name of the saint of the monastery as one of the monastic villages. It had been, by aid of St. Michael, won over from heathendom to Christianity; so, to celebrate the saint's victory, it was called by his name. The group of Michael churches would therefore represent the villages of the lay tribe that had become Christian, but which still belonged to the lay tribe, and so could not be called by the name of the Saint, or the tribe of the Saint, or of his family. They thus form a group which marks the spread of Christianity. It was no longer confined to the lands owned by the monastery, it extended to lands owned also by the lay tribe. This view is borne out by an observation of Archdeacon Bevan's,[1] that all the Michael churches in the diocese of St. David's, with one exception, are in the country districts, that is, away from the influence of monasteries. Had they been nearer the monastery, probably the pressure brought to bear would have made the lay tribe grant the church to the tribe of the Saint, but, being away in the country, the monastery did not require the land; the village had become Christian, what was it to be called? Some term, other than that of ownership had to be found, and the term selected was one that would celebrate the victory of the cross over the Pagan.

The Mary churches mark a new phase in the same process; they denote the rise of the Latin influence, and

[1] *Diocesan History of St. David's*, p. 36.

show the places that submitted to the Latin rule. The villages and towns, where the Latin Church was victorious in ousting the Welsh, were, on account of the victory, dedicated by the Latins to St. Mary, dedicated in the modern sense of the term: the Mary dedications superseded the old nomenclature, and proclaimed the path of the victorious rival church. The history of the *llan* as a place name, is, therefore, most instructive in Welsh history; first, the village, the enclosure, the fortress, which the monastic colony formed against the wild tribes; then, the great enclosure, the church called by the name of the saint, or saints, of the monastery to which the missionaries belonged—this identifies the locality of the monastic colonies; then the villages that did not belong to the monastery, but professed Christianity, and which, to celebrate the victory of the faith, were called after the saint by whose aid the victory was won; and, lastly, the villages where, for different causes, the Latin, the hated Latin, was able to establish himself, and get rid of the monastic colony, the native saint, and all connection with the Celtic Church. The term, *llan*, therefore remains a witness of the struggle, first, with the fears of the Welsh princes, then with the Welsh Pagans, and, lastly, with the Latin Church. Such would seem to be the story of the *llan* groups of churches.

The next term usually translated church is *eglwys*, a term which Archdeacon Bevan says[1] is the Welsh form of *ecclesia*, the generic term for the primary churches. To a person who holds to the view that all Welsh Christianity is Latin, this would of course be so, but to those who believe in the Celtic origin of the Welsh churches, *eglwys* has a very different meaning; it points to a class of church that was set up as the rival of the Celtic *llan*.

[1] *Diocesan History of St. David's*, p. 37.

The group of places called *llan* mark the primary Celtic church, the *eglwys* marks the group of churches that the Latins brought in. When the Latin was able to get hold of an existing church, he dedicated it to the Virgin, and it became one of the Llanfair groups; when he had to introduce a new church in the district, he called it by his own name, *ecclesia*, which became corrupted into *eglwys*. So the churches called *eglwys* represent a later class than the *llan* group; the *llan* representing a settlement both ecclesiastical and civil, the *eglwys*, the establishment of a church and nothing more. This view is borne out if the dedication of the churches styled *eglwys* is examined. In most instances, such churches are dedicated, not to Celtic, but to Latin saints. It is true that in some cases they may mark, not the building of a new church, but the re-building of an old one; still, in one form or another, the group of churches styled *eglwys* show the efforts of the Latin to get a hold on Wales, and are a further development of that policy, of which the Llanfair churches were the beginning. Compared with the *llan*, the *eglwys* are but a very limited group. If Rees' list of churches is taken, it will be found that the total number of places called *eglwys* is but seven, and that these occur only in four out of the twelve counties, and that, in the great Welsh district of Cardiganshire there are none, while in Glamorganshire there are but two, and in Carmarthenshire one.

It can, therefore, be said of the *eglwys* groups that, although doubtless *eglwys* is the Welsh form of *ecclesia*, and the churches called *eglwys* are primary churches, yet the *eglwys* churches do not represent in any way the original churches of Wales, and that the use of the term was probably to designate the churches either originally built by the Latins, or rebuilt by them, as opposed to the older churches, the *llan*.

The chapels in Celtic settlements, or secondary churches, are a much more difficult matter than the primary churches. No theory has yet been put forward that satisfactorily clears up all the difficulties of the matter. Several words are used to distinguish these churches, and the difficulty is, to say, with any degree of accuracy, what are the distinctions between the different kinds of secondary churches—chapelries, as we should call them. There are three Welsh terms translated chapel—the familiar form *capel*, the less known *bettws*, and the term *capel bettws*, which combines the two. What was the precise distinction between *capel* and *bettws*, is one of the points on which no two writers agree. Bevan says,[1] "the term *capel*, in Latin *capella*, which originated in France to describe the building in which the little cope of St. Martin was kept in the palace of the Merovingian kings, and was thence extended to any small church. The capella occasionally attained some of the privileges of the mother church, particularly that of baptism, in which case it was termed *capella baptismalis*, a class of building which occupied an intermediate position between the *capella* proper, and the *ecclesia*, or mother church." He then goes on to suggest that *bettws*, or *capel bettws*, means a chapel having the right of baptism; and so defines the terms, the mother church, *ecclesia*, the chapel, *capel*, the baptismal chapel, *bettws*, or *capel bettws*. Ingenious as this theory is, it has really no evidence on which to rest. It may be granted that some of the *bettws* churches were places in which baptism was celebrated, and some were not; it may also be granted that far more of the *bettws* buildings have survived than the *capel* buildings, that some of the *bettws* buildings are now independent churches; but when all this has been conceded, the solution as to what was the

[1] *Diocesan History of St. David's*, p. 38.

precise distinction between the *llan*, the *bettws*, and the *capel*, seems as far off as ever. Archdeacon Bevan's view may be accepted as the last Latin explanation of the subject, but the explanation drawn from Latin authorities fails to clear up the difficulties—it is only another conjecture, and has not much more to support it than any other conjecture from Latin sources; the Celtic explanation is altogether left out of sight.

In the Irish laws, four different kinds of churches are described, the *annoit*, the *dalta*, the *compairche*, the *cill*, and to each of these a definite meaning is attached. The *annoit*, the *dalta*, and the *compairche*, were all distinct members of the group of monastic churches, each having its own separate rank and position, while the *cill* church was not, like the Latin cell, a mere dependent establishment of the monastery, but was in a more independent position. The three churches of the monastic group, the *annoit*, the *dalta*, and the *compairche*, stood as follows: the *annoit* was the church directly connected with the great saint of the tribe of the Saint by some personal connection; he had either been there or some of his relics were kept there. It would be the most important of the monastic colonies, the tribal church. A *dalta* church was one founded by a member of the monastery, but which had not any personal connection with the saint of the tribe; if the term is permissible, it would be a colony of the second rank, the *annoit* church being a colony of the first. A *compairche* church was one that was under the same tutelage as the *annoit* or *dalta* church.[1] The Irish terms therefore show the system of relationship which the different monastic colonies bore to each other—the subordination of the kinds of churches. That something of the sort is to be found in Wales is clear from the Welsh laws. Certain churches

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iii, 66 n.

were in a more exalted position than others. A mother church, for instance; a higher fine was payable for an offence in a mother church (*Mam eglwys*)[1] than in an ordinary church, and it is plain that the mother church was in the nature of a monastic establishment, as half the fine went to the abbot, the other half to the priests and the community.[2] The mother church would be the great colony, the first class colony from the monastery, and would be the superior class of *llan*; that is, a *llan* which had other churches subordinate to it. The *annoit* church and the mother church would therefore be the same, but the second class of *llan*; the *llan* without chapels would be also a church founded by monks from the monastery, but not personally connected with the saint of the tribe; it would not be a mother church, as it had no offshoots, but still it would be a colony from the monastery; this would be similar to the *dalta* church, and these two classes would comprise the two great kinds of monastic colonies.

The secondary churches, that is, the colonies from the primary, have now to be considered; they are of two kinds. Churches that are complete settlements from the original colony—such places as these would be the Irish *compairche* churches; they would belong to the same tribe of the Saint, and be under the tutelage of the great saint of that tribe, but they would be fully-constituted colonies; if not independent, yet very nearly so. These would be the Welsh *bettws*, and it is not to be lost sight of that the term, *bettws*, means a settlement, or resting-place; while the churches that were served from the *dalta* church, or from the *bettws*, but were not permanent settlements, not colonies, but only places where, for some reason or the other, it was desirable to

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 78. [2] *Ibid.*

hold Divine service, would be the *cill*, or *capel*. It is the case that there are differences in the Irish and Welsh rules as to these churches—much that relates to the Irish is not to be found in the Welsh; but the space of time separating the Welsh and Irish laws may account for this. It is, however, far more likely that the classification of the two groups of churches, both being Celtic, is due to the tribal and monastic ideas of the Celt, rather than to Latin notions, which the Celt abhorred with a steady abhorrence. It is a reasonable explanation that the *llan* represented the two classes of monastic colonies, the *annoit*, and *dalta*; the *bettws*, the settlement from the colony; the *compairche*, and the *capel*, the *cill*, the place where Divine service was performed and nothing more. Change of circumstances, wars, confiscations, and tumults, would render places where, at one time, a service was necessary, no longer so, and thus account for the disappearance of a number of chapels. While the *bettws*, being not merely a place where Divine worship was performed, but also a settlement, would account for the fact that the *bettws* has, in so many cases, survived, while the *capel* perished. The combination of *capel-bettws* would denote a settlement that had not originally any place of worship; but where, subsequently, a chapel was established, for instance, a Pagan village not granted to the tribe of the Saint, one of the places where, if a church had been established instead of a chapel, it would have been one of the Michael churches, as it was not of sufficient importance for a church, it became a *capel-bettws*.

The scheme of the evangelization of Wales, following that of all Celtic countries, would therefore be: (1) The establishment of some large monastery which, after a time, became a school of learning, and sent out bands of missionaries who settled on land which had either been

granted to their house, or of which they obtained grants; (2) the gradual establishment of these colonies over the country, the erection of so many *llans*, or fortified enclosures, each having some form of monastic institution; (3) offshoots from these colonies, which took either the form of independent settlements, nominally connected (*bettws*), or of places only for religious worship (*capel*), which were established or abandoned, as the necessities of the case required. Such a system was obviously opposed to anything like local division of the country. What the necessities of the tribe required, that the tribal church supplied; but the organization was dependent on the tribal necessities for the time being, not on independent territorial divisions, wholly irrespective of tribes or other considerations. If this is borne in mind in considering questions of ecclesiastical organization in Wales, many of the existing difficulties, if they do not quite disappear, are by no means so formidable as is generally supposed. All the conjectural difficulties Rees raises about curacies and titles are in fact non-existent, unless the Latin organization for the Welsh Church is assumed, and the Celtic ignored.

An argument in favour of the view here put forward may be drawn from the fact that in those parts of Wales where the Norman and subsequent conquerors were most powerful the ecclesiastical system, as we now find it, closely resembles the Latin as established in England; while in those parts of Wales where the Welsh element prevailed longest a different system existed, and one more like what has been here described as the Celtic. That part of Pembrokeshire which was a Flemish colony, and that part of Glamorganshire that was in the hands of the Norman is marked by a series of small rectories, as if the English parochial system had been introduced. While in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire the old Celtic system

prevails, the parochial system exists in name, but the size of the parishes is enormous, and the ecclesiastical system consists of one church and a series of subordinate chapels. Whenever it was that Wales was divided into parishes, it may be taken as clear it was not a Welsh, but a foreign division. It would appear that it was a gradual process, and extending over a long period. This would in some degree account for the extraordinary difference in size of the Welsh parishes. Where the foreigner was strong, churches were built and districts assigned to them, as in England; where the Welsh were strong, this could not be done, only a place here and there, often the most valuable locality, either for pasture or defence, was selected out of the district by the Normans, and the rest left. At last all that was not in a parish was formed into one, and hence the enormous and irregular size of the parishes in the Welsh parts of Wales. Indeed, if a map of Wales is examined, it is fairly safe to say that the districts where the parishes are small denote districts where foreigners settled and the Welsh were excluded, while the districts where parishes are large denote the parts of Wales where the Welsh held their own longest.

But some of these Welsh districts are those where traces of early Celtic Christianity are to be found in the shape of inscribed stones, so that it may be safely assumed that the division into parishes had nothing to do with the conversion of the country, or with its early Christianity, or religious organization. It, however, formed such a necessary part of the Latin system of government that the Norman bishops must have tried to carry it out. Probably something of the sort had been done in the time of Giraldus, as, there being then archdeaconries, there must have been some limits to the archdeaconries, and these limits would probably be certain rural deaneries. In Pope Nicholas'

Valor (1291) it seems that rural deaneries existed throughout Wales, as the taxation proceeds on the basis of deaneries. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that, for ecclesiastical purposes, Wales was divided into parishes some time between the Norman conquest and the beginning of the fourteenth century. Whether the division was more than an ecclesiastical division seems doubtful, but it was sufficient to do away with the legal existence of a monastic tribal church, and substitute a territorial one in its place. One great effect of this would be to efface all the ties that had united the churches together, and to make each church independent of the other. Probably at the time of the change the system of dependence and the whole tribal system had become more a matter of sentiment than of real importance, but the Welsh clung to the tribal idea, and it is their affection for it that has made any other form of religious organization so very unpopular in Wales. The opposition of the Welsh clergy to Edward I, and their support of the Welsh princes, were probably due to their detestation of a system that was being forced upon them, and was opposed to all their preconceived ideas of religion. No one can read the *Descriptio Cambriæ* of Giraldus, or the report of Archbishop Peckham's visitation of the Welsh dioceses, without seeing clearly the discontent that existed against the process then going on in Church and State. The division of the country into parishes would not be the least of the grievances of either the Welsh clergy or laity.

For purposes of religious worship all the various kinds of churches were regarded as equal, but for other purposes the mother church was presumed to have a special sanctity attached to it. A mother church was the chief church of the tribe, and any tribal religious ceremony could only take place there. No one, says the Welsh law, is to resort

to a mother church more than to another, except for denying or receiving a son; those two things are only to take place in a mother church.[1] These ceremonies of denying or recognizing a son were probably the most important of all the Welsh tribal rites, as upon them depended the question who were, and who were not, members of the tribe. As at the present day the rule is that marriages can only take place in the parish church unless there is a chapel or other place specially licensed for the purpose, and as the records as to marriages and burials, and other personal matters relating to the parishioners, are kept in the parish church, so, in Celtic times, it was only at the church of the tribe, the mother church, that the question who were tribesmen could be settled. Whether there was anything in the nature of a record of such ceremonies beyond the recitals of their bards may be doubtful, but the church of the tribe was the most public place of the tribe where the elders and chiefs would be assembled, and so here the most solemn tribal ceremonies took place. There may also have been another reason. At the ceremony of owning or disowning a child, the person who took the oath, whether mother or father, had to place his hand upon the sacred relics of the tribe on the altar. These relics were always kept in the *annoit* church, and it does not appear clear if the other churches were allowed to have the custody of relics; if they had, they were certainly relics of less importance and sanctity than those kept in the mother church of the tribe. It is more than probable that the ceremony of swearing or disowning a child was the Christian form of some old Pagan custom, the adaptation of some heathen rite; that the sacred relics represented the old Pagan idol of the tribe. So that, as formerly in heathen times, the chief temple of the god of the tribe

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii. 113.

was the place for the decision of all matters relating to the tribe and its rights, so, on the tribe becoming Christian, the chief church of the tribe became the place where, in a modified form, the rites and ceremonies connected with the tribe were still carried on and performed. This view is brought out in a passage in the *Cyvreithiau Cymru*: If a judgment or verdict is given against a man, he could purge himself from it by taking certain oaths in a church: but it is expressly stated that while he can do this in all ordinary cases in any church, whether a mother church or not, yet for some cases resort must be had to a mother church, as in the cases already mentioned of denying or receiving a son, "these two things can only take place in a mother church".[1] In another passage the matter is further elaborated, in the case of a man who either did not belong to a tribe, or was unable to reach the mother church of the tribe: "If a man is travelling, and a judgment is given against him, he was to resort to the first church or to the first available church. If a man on progress without residence or an *innate boneddig* deny surety, and a *raith* be adjudged on him, and he wishes to know where he shall give the *raith*, by law it is most right in the church of the place where the law overtook him, for he is not to have his holy water or mass bread in one church more than another."[2] The distinction drawn in the law is plain. Any mere matter of private concern could be decided in any church; it was no concern of the tribe, and they were not affected by it. But a question as to who was a member of the tribe, a question as to tribal rights, concerned the whole tribe, and could only be determined in the presence of the tribe, that is, in the church of the tribe, the mother church. It is, in effect, the same idea that was at a later date developed

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 112. [2] *Ibid.*

into the distinction between personal and real actions; personal actions could be tried anywhere, real only where the land lay; if, for land, tribal rights are substituted, it will express the Celtic idea as to the difference between tribal and non-tribal cases. The analogy is further borne out by the fact that questions as to tribal land could only be decided in the proper tribal place, the mother church. A very frequent subject of the Welsh laws is the question as to who was the proper person to decide a case of disputed boundaries, a question in which, it is obvious, the tribe were largely interested. These questions, which in the Welsh code are spoken of as the right to *meer*, form a very instructive portion of Welsh law. One trace of the old system is found in the *Cyvreithiau Cymru*[1]: "There is one precedence to a church in opposition to a privileged court, priority of *meering*, if it have a crozier and gospel (*bagyl ac euengil*) for land and soil this precedence is for the church." The only church that had the right of *meering* was the church with the crozier, that is, the monastic church; the ordinary church had not this right.

When once the Latin rule became predominant, all idea of the tribal connection of the different churches gradually disappeared. That it took a very long time to die out there is no doubt—Probably a good deal of it was adopted by the Latins in their ecclesiastical system as it would increase their power. Nowhere else, perhaps, until the church revival of our owndays, has the holder of a benefice had so much patronage as was the case in a Welsh parish. The number of chapels, or churches, dependent on some of the churches, and in the gift of the incumbent, was considerable. This, as has been already pointed out, is due to the monastic colonies, the churches the monks found it necessary to establish. The number of the *bettws*, and

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 367.

cills, is much larger than is usually imagined. In two parishes in Cardiganshire, the number of chapels in the gift of the vicar is nine. In the one case, Llanbadarn, the vicar can present to five; while in the other instance, Llanddewibrefi, the vicar presents to four.

There is a passage in the *Liber Landavensis*[1] which has a considerable bearing on the question of *annoit* churches. On the death of Teilo, a contest arose among the members of three of the Teilo churches, or colonies, as to which of them was entitled to have possession of his body, that is, which of them should be the *annoit* church. The three churches were, a Pembrokeshire church, Pennalun, said to be Penaly, near Tenby, a Carmarthenshire church, Llandeilo Vawr, the modern Llandeilo, and a Glamorganshire church, Llandaff itself. Two of the three are within the limits of what became the diocese of St. David's. The localities are important, as they show the claim was made, not as confined to any locality or district, but wholly upon personal grounds. Penaly claimed on the ground that it was the burial-place of Teilo's family, and so had the right to possess his body. Llandeilo, as being the place of the saint's residence on his retirement from the world, and the actual place of his death. Llandaff, as having been his episcopal see, and on account of its privileges and dignities, its consecration and in obedience to the unanimous voice of the diocese, and especially because of its former state and the appointment of Dubricius, and others. It is to be noticed that even the great monastery of Llandaff itself, although claiming as the mother church to possess the precious relics, yet had no right to them on that ground, and could not deprive her colonies of them merely because she was the mother church of all the Teilo churches. The contest seems to

[1] P. 110.

point to the fact that the connection with the saint gave a right to claim his relics, but did not absolutely entitle the church to them, so as to deprive a church that had a better right. If the possession of the relics of the saint was one of the essentials of being an *annoit* church, the mere fact of being superior in rank could not deprive the inferior church of the chance of attaining to that dignity. It also seems to point to the fact that, without the relics, the church could not become an *annoit* church, as it would not possess the necessary qualifications that an *annoit* church should have, so as to enable the ceremonies that were to be performed in *annoit* churches to be done there. It is also not a little singular that no claim was put forward by the monastery of St. David's to the relics, for if the Teilo, bishop of St. David's, was the same as the Teilo of Llandaff, it would seem that they also had a claim to their possession. If no claim was put forward, it would go to prove that the Teilo, bishop of St. David's, and the Teilo, bishop of Llandaff, were not the same person, or it may be the Llandaff monks deliberately left out their rival's claim.

The alleged solution of the difficulty should not be passed over as merely a transparent fiction, and a monkish invention. It is said that Teilo's body was miraculously multiplied, so that each claimant had one example. Probably this was the way the Llandaff monks accounted for the fact that they were not successful in carrying off the body; or it may be that a process similar to the judgment of Solomon was adopted, and each church took a part, as it may well have been necessary that each of the churches, for local reasons, should become an *annoit* church, and have the precious relics. It is fairly certain, if the Llandaff church had really been triumphant over the others, the fact would have been recorded, as the

monks would never have omitted to mention so great and glorious a victory. Probably multiplication was the way they explained their defeat. Llandaff was successful in establishing her claim to sanctity by the possession of one of the examples, for the sanctity of the shrine of Teilo in the Llandaff church lasted almost until our own days. In modern times, it is said to have been the custom that if a more than usually solemn sanction was required for a bargain, such sanction was obtained by making the contract at the shrine of Teilo. When David became a Latin saint, his shrine was probably the more orthodox place for the pilgrimage of faithful sons of the Latin church, but the tomb of Teilo long held its own in the opinion of the Welsh. It is unfortunate that we know but little of the subsequent history of the other two churches. Penaly sank into obscurity, but Llandeilo has always been a place of importance; probably the possession of the relics of Teilo may have made it so, but the fact of its being in the territory of other tribes, and, ultimately, in another diocese, may have prevented its claims to the consideration of the faithful being advocated as they would have been, if it had been within the limits of what became the diocese of Llandaff. It is a curious piece of ecclesiastical history if Pennalun was Penaly. Looking at its situation, so near St. David's, and the fact that it was one of the Pembrokeshire group of Teilo churches, there might have been a necessity for its being an *annoit* church, so as to keep up the Teilo influence in that quarter, the colony requiring a local mother church. In the same way the Carmarthenshire Teilo colonies required an *annoit* church, and Llandeilo was fixed upon to satisfy this want, and strengthen the position there of the Llandaff colony. In the days before dioceses, the Llandaff house would do what it could to maintain the

importance of both colonies; but after the fight between Urban and Bernard, as to the limits of the diocese, and the practical triumph of St. David's, it then became the policy of Llandaff to depreciate the two groups of colonies as much as possible, and to maintain that the shrine at Llandaff was the only genuine one, so as to prevent the St. David's monks claiming the possession of the shrines of the two great South Wales saints within their borders. Whether this is the real explanation, or not, it is impossible now to say; we unfortunately know so little of the early history of the Welsh Church that such points as these must be matters of inference and conjecture. Nor do we know how the question as to *annoit* churches was settled in other cases. But this incident is instructive as showing the importance attaching to the position of the *annoit* church, and the necessity there appears to have been for both the requisites for its existence being satisfied—(1) personal connection with the saint, and (2) possession of his relics.

Having regard to the purpose for which the *Liber Landavensis* was written, the support of the Llandaff claims, it follows, almost of course, that the writers, being Llandaff monks, should insist on their *replica* of the saint's body being the only genuine one, and this they do; for the story goes on, evidently told, not by a Celt, but by a Latin: "It was known to all the people by the great number of miracles, and the accounts of ancient writers, that Teilo was certainly taken to Llandaff, for at the tomb of the eminent prelate, the sick were most easily healed of their diseases, sight given to the blind, and hearing to the deaf."[1] The Llandaff monks would have been false to every tradition of their monastery if they did not contend that theirs was the only genuine shrine. It

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, p. 110.

must be borne in mind that the Llandaff monks were not merely fighting for their pecuniary interest arising from the offerings at the tomb of Teilo. The Celtic rule of succession to the head of the house had not yet been finally abrogated. Urban was but the first Latin bishop, and on his death claims might be made to the headship of the Llandaff house by the person entitled under the old Celtic rules. If Penaly and Llandeilo did not really possess the relics of Teilo, they were not *annoit* churches, and so their heads would not have any claim until after the Llandaff house had been exhausted. It was at least worth a struggle to prevent them being qualified to be possible competitors for the headship of the tribe of the Saint, the abbacy of Llandaff, and it is impossible not to admire the way in which it was done. The multiplication of saints' bodies was no novelty in the Latin church; if ever there was a case where the end was justified by the means, it was here. Each of the rival claimants started fairly, but Llandaff appealed to results to show that she alone was the *annoit* church, and so alone entitled to select the head of the tribe of the Saint.

No account of the tribal churches can omit some allusion to one of the most remarkable features of the system—that which the *Irish Laws* speak of as "desertion" from a church. If a person belonged to a church he could not leave it, could not get rid of the tie, the tribal tie that bound him to it, except for certain recognized reasons which were known to the law. If a man deserted his original church, and died belonging to another, two thirds of his property went to the original church, and one third to the new church.[1] That is, that no member of the tribe of the Saint, by leaving the monastery, could take with him the tribal property. As in the lay tribe, the common

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., iii, 65.

stock could not be diminished by any act of the tribesman, so, in the tribe of the Saint, the tribesman, by deserting the church could not affect the rights of the tribe—could not, by any act of his, deprive his church of its property. It was not until the deserter's family had been members of the new church for three generations that the rights of the old church to his property ceased;[1] he had then become a member of the family of the new church, and his property, part of the property of its family.

This view of the position of the church goes far to explain some of the difficulties in the Welsh laws as to the position of a tribesman. A man could not, at his own will and pleasure, get rid either of his tribe or of his church; the alliance between the church and tribe being most close. After four generations, he could become a member, or, rather, was qualified to become a member, of a tribe other than the one in which he belonged.[2] After three generations, if he had belonged continuously to one church, the right of his original church, the tribal church, over him ceased, and the new church would obtain tribal rights. It thus appears that one of the great duties of the church was to keep the tribe together. The Latin system was based on the notion that everything must be sacrificed to keep the church intact; the Celtic, that no sacrifice was too great to preserve the integrity of the tribe, and the church, by becoming a part of the tribal organization, made their interests identical. It therefore becomes impossible to explain the difficulties of the Welsh Church system on any other than a tribal basis. Treating the matter from a parochial standpoint only aggravates and increases the anomalies. It was for the mother church to say if a man was, or was not, a tribesman; it was only there the

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., iii, 67.
[2] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 505.

question could be decided, whether or not he had ceased to be a tribesman; whether the church and the tribe had, or had not, lost their rights over him and over his property. The division, or rather, the classification of churches, thus became a point of the greatest importance, as it, alone, settled where the question as to the man's position could be decided. The mother church, as the chief church of the tribe, had rights which gave her an importance that none of her colonies could claim: "She knoweth her own and calleth them by name." It was this that was the cause of all questions of paternity, of family, or of the like class being decided in the mother church.

While the mother church kept up her hold over her tribesmen they also had their claims upon her. The tribesman was, by the Irish laws,[1] entitled as of right to be buried where his father had been previously—a right obviously based on the desire to preserve the proofs of his tribal rights. If the grandfather had been buried in an *annoit* church, and the father in another, the son could claim, as of right, to be buried with his father, although, had he wished it, he could have gone elsewhere. If the object was to cast off the old tribe and belong to another, the right to be buried with his father was most important, and furnished proof of a man's descent in case the son desired to change his tribe. If the son died without making any choice, then both the original church, and the church to which the deceased belonged at the time of his death, were equally entitled. In such a case the claims of the two were to be settled by lot.[2]

If these things are borne in mind, it will be seen how impossible it was to get rid of a system that had so eaten its way into the life of the Celt, and to establish a

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., iii, 33. [2] *Ibid.*, iii, 67.

new basis for all the social and religious ideas of the tribe, such as the parochial system. Cut up, as the country was, into the possessions of various small tribes, the ecclesiastical organization was based on the fact that the tribal customs, as modified by Christianity, were still the law of the land, and that they applied, not to any local district or place, but throughout all the territory of the tribe. To try to make it possible to adapt such a system to land belonging to different tribes, or to a district other than that of their own tribe, would have been hopeless. A tribal church with a number of dependent or subordinate chapels belonging to it, is precisely the system that it would be expected to find as the result of such a state of things as existed in Wales—monasteries and monastic colonies, tribal churches, and offshoots. Although a system by no means so perfect in the way of organization as that of Archbishop Theodore, yet it adapted itself to, and was adopted by, the Celt in a way that nothing else could have done. In considering it, this must be remembered, that it is based upon the tribe, the *llan*, the tribal church, not upon any local divisions, such as the parishes; of these it knew nothing, still less of rural deans, archdeacons, and dioceses. All these were, in so far as Wales is concerned, the product of another system and of a later age.

Looking at the tribal church in this light, it is worth while to see how far the provisions of the Welsh codes and the Welsh laws apply to it. Taking the codes first. They show us the state of things during the tenth century, at a time when Celtic customs had so far become established and recognized, as to be collected into a body of laws. The first provisions are for fines for misconduct in the churches; the fine is the same for the offence if done in the palace, as in the church, and a double fine is

imposed if the offence is in a mother church. The fine, when paid, is divided among the ecclesiastics, that is, the tribesmen.[1] A husband, or wife, can only give their property by will to the church, or to the chief—that is, to the lay or ecclesiastical tribe—or to pay debts.[2] A criminal who has children can leave nothing by will, only enough to pay his debts, and the *dared* to the church.[3] The rights of the church were not to be done away with or affected by any act of the tribesman. He could forfeit his own rights, but not those of his tribe, either of the lay or of the ecclesiastical. No act of the tribesman could affect the position of the church.

In the event of a person becoming surety for another, there were three means by which he could be released from his suretyship: (1) by payment, (2) by giving a pledge, (3) by denying the surety.[4] In the last case various ceremonies as to swearing had to be gone through, and in addition to his own oath, the debtor had to get the oaths of four of his relations on his father's side, and two of his mother's, to support him in his testimony; these relations were to be so closely connected with him that they would have to pay or receive a share of any compensation for murder (*galanas*), payable in respect of the debtor.[5] The swearing took place in the church, whatever class of church it might be in which the debtor heard mass, between the *Benedicamus* and the distribution of the sacramental bread.[6] Whichever way the judgment went, it was conclusive; but, if it went against the surety, he could be prosecuted for perjury. This mixture of judicial and religious ceremonies gives a good illustration of the position of the church amongst the Welsh tribes. The tribesman who denied his liability, was sworn on the

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 433. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 85. [3] *Ibid.*, i, 255.
[4] *Ibid.*, i, 113. [5] *Ibid.*, i, 115.
[6] *Ibid.* In the text of the Code here the protection of the Pope is invoked.

sacred relics of the tribe—relics that had probably taken the place of some old idol, or some other Pagan object of peculiar sanctity in the presence of the tribesmen who were interested, as sureties in retaining the debtor's property for the tribe, for if he was liable to make good the claim, he would leave so much less property to be divided among the tribesmen at his death, or to make good the price for any crime he might commit, and the tribe would have to find the balance. The solemn judgment at the most solemn time of the service in the assembly of the tribesmen, a survival of the time when the judicial and priestly offices were united, all went to point to a ceremony which combined the functions of the lay and the ecclesiastical tribes, when the priest, the chosen officer of the tribe, decided, if not by the aid of supernatural powers, at least, by the help he received from the gods of the tribe. It is also to be noted that the church where the ceremony was to take place, had nothing to do with any local division, such as a parish. It was to be the place where the debtor heard mass, the place where the tribal offering was made. In a subsequent passage the church is declared to be the authority that is to proceed againt the surety, if the decision went against him for breaking his most solemn oath. "The church and the king are to enforce the evidence, for God has been taken instead of a surety. The church is to forbid the evidence being broken, and the king is to enforce it, because for every person who has been baptized, the evidence is to be taken, as well man as woman. Therefore, both men and women are to give evidence for a child of the age of seven, which shall go under the hand of the confessor."[1] Although this is very obscurely expressed, the meaning is clear. A tribesman who perjured himself was to be punished, not so much for

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 135.

false swearing, as for his offence against the tribe and its gods. He had, as a tribesman, dared to insult the tribe and its gods by a false appeal to them; brought, or endeavoured to bring them into contempt, and for this the tribe should proceed against the offender. It was not the mere fact of perjury; if he had taken a false oath in any church but a tribal church it would have only been his own affair, but bringing the tribe and its authority into contempt was a different matter. This distinction between the character of the crime in accordance with the sanctity of the place where it was committed, is a peculiarly Celtic idea. With the Latins, perjury in any church would be punished; with the Celt, it was not the perjury that was wrong, it was the false swearing in the tribal church, before the authorities of the tribe. It is something like the modern English idea of perjury: it is no crime to take a false oath as such, only if it is material to the question tried. The Celt did not think, some would say, does not think, a false oath a crime, unless it was taken in a particular place, and under particular circumstances. This difference in the character and nature of the church altering the crime, seems to distinguish the Latin from the Celtic ideas of church government.

Another point on which the two systems differed completely was the supremacy of the church. The Latins held the church was, in all cases, supreme over the state. The Celts held that the rights of the church did not extend to protect the tribesman in all cases from the rights of the tribe. "Three things against which there is no protection if they be admitted—suretyship, against crime, suretyship for, and taking possession of, land."[1] The reason given is that the church could only get such rights by the gift of a chief.[2] That the possession of such

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 139. [2] *Ibid.*

an exemption by the church would be a direct contravention of the tribal rights of the chief, and that, therefore, the church, if, in any case, she alleged they existed, was required specially to prove them. If the chief had really, and it could be proved he had, granted away these rights to his own loss, there was no more to be said; but such a condition of things was not to be presumed, it required special proof. On the accession of every new chief, the owners of church lands, that is, the members of the tribe of the Saint, had to come before the chief, and state what rights they claimed to possess.[1] It was then for the chief to say whether they were, or were not, to retain these rights; probably in time this became a mere form, and no chief would have dared to have withheld any of the rights of the tribe of the Saint, which either did not exist, or which the tribe claimed to exist; but this does not in the least affect the very remarkable fact that in the Celtic church the tribal chief claimed the supremacy over the lands, the possessions, and the persons, not only of the lay tribe, but also of the tribe of the Saint. If the church claimed any exceptional privilege, she was in exactly the same position, neither better nor worse than any other person or body claiming such privileges. The Church had to prove her case, and to prove it like any other claimant. "If", says the code,[2] "any church should declare that it can keep a person in its sanctuary for seven years without his doing right, or for a longer period, and the lord of the country oppose the declaration, and say no such privileges originated from him to it, it is necessary for the church to have that privilege secured by respectable customary witnesses; and if it can do so let its privileges be preserved undisturbed; if it fail, let the church conduct him as best it may, or let him do right for the illegal act

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 139. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 141.

he has committed." This very important passage clearly defines the respective positions under the Celtic system of church and state, of the tribe of the Saint and the tribe of the land. The privileges of the church were derived from the chief, and were the gifts of the chief; they only existed by his favour—he had given them and he could revoke them. They were not like the privileges claimed by the Latin Church, the inalienable heritage of the Church testifying to the greatness of her position, her authority over all temporal rulers, to be decided only in her own courts, by her own judges,—not by lay tribunals, who had no jurisdiction over matters connected with, or relating to the church. The Celt held that the question in each case was for the lay tribunal, the tribe, to decide what had been taken from the tribe and given to the church, and that this was a matter for the tribe to decide in the same way, and in no other, as it would decide any question as to the rights of the tribe or its tribesmen, over all of which the tribe, and no other authority, was supreme.

When this idea is realized, it is easy to see why it was that such deadly hatred existed between Latins and Celts, and their respective Churches. It was not a matter of ritual or ceremony, not tonsure, or the date of Easter, that lay at the root of the controversy between the two churches. It was the great fundamental point of divergence, the supremacy of church or of state. Each petty Welsh chieftain, the head of each obscure Welsh tribe, claimed the right to lay down with authority what were the rights and privileges the church within his territories should possess. This was far removed from the Latin idea of a church, of the *imperium in imperio*. For a Welsh chief to claim a power that the emperors of the west did not dare to pretend to possess, was too much for

the Latin authorities. Such a claim must have approached very nearly to the Latin idea of the accursed thing. No wonder the Latins hated the Celtic Church, and waged a war of extermination against it, calling its members heretics and schismatics, as they found them asserting and maintaining a doctrine most distasteful to the Latin Church, the subordination of the church to the state, the authority of the lay over the ecclesiastical tribunals, the right of each tribe to fix the powers and limits of the church within its territories.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENDOWMENTS.

It is a noteworthy fact in the history of the Celtic Church, that the strongest evidence in favour of her separate existence is to be found, not in her liturgy, not in her religious rites, ceremonies, or observances, not in the relations of her bishops and clergy, but in the rules which regulated her property and endowments. It is true, that there are many of these rules that are most difficult to understand; it is also true that there is much to be learnt with regard to her property, but it is equally true that all the information we have is quite unintelligible if it is considered in any other light than that of the tribe, or from any other point than that of tribal ownership. The tribal rules were, no doubt, modified to some extent by the religious ideas of the Celtic monks, but it may be asserted with confidence that the best information that has come down to us of the Welsh tribal system, is to be found in the rules regulating the ecclesiastical property of the Celtic Church. It has been truly said by a modern writer,[1] "that the Church strikes from outside like a wedge into the Welsh tribal system". The church has had the effect of preserving the main features of this system, in a way that would otherwise have been impossible. However much they desired and strove to alter the state of things that existed in Wales, foreign ecclesiastics had to describe them, not as they wanted to make them, but as they actually were; and their descriptions, which have come

[1] Seebohm, *The Tribal System in Wales*, p. 172.

down to us in the Welsh codes and laws, have preserved for us, not merely the outlines, but also, in some cases, the details of the tribal system of Wales.

It is always assumed, as a matter of course, that the great mainstay of all church endowments has been tithes. It is by some persons considered now, as it was by James I, to be almost an act of irreligion to question this. The biographer of Melchisedec has much to answer for. The divine origin of tithes is often asserted; and to allege that it was possible for any church not to have depended on tithes for its subsistence, is regarded almost as an act of apostacy. In spite of this, it is not the least remarkable fact in the history of the Celtic Church, both in Ireland and Wales, that it appears that, originally, tithes were not the great source of provision for its clergy. Most of the documents we have that relate to the Celtic Church in Wales, and which are of a date anterior to the Norman conquest, contain very few allusions to tithes. No one can read the *Liber Landavensis* or the Welsh laws without being struck with the fact that the references as to tithes are most meagre, and that it does not appear from these documents that such riches as the Welsh clergy possessed were composed of tithes. The *Liber Landavensis* professes to be a record of the grants made by the Welsh princes to the monastery of Llandaff, from the time of Teilo to the Norman conquest, a space of some four or five hundred years. It shows, or purports to show, the additions which, from time to time, the monastery made to its territories and possessions under the rule of each successive head of its house, first, in the time of the abbots, then of the bishops: it specifies over and over again the lands, waters, villages, and rights, which were granted to the Church, but it does not mention or allude to tithes. So much is this the case that those who argue

that tithes existed in the Welsh Celtic Church in the same way and to the same extent as they existed in the Latin, must be prepared to doubt the genuineness of the documents in the *Liber Landavensis*, containing, as they do, no mention of tithes. It is true that there are some places in the codes where tithes are mentioned, but it does not seem from these passages that tithe was a fixed legal payment to the church, but so far as it was paid, it went to the king or chief of the tribe.

It has already been shown that there is no trace in early times in the Celtic Church of such a class as a body of parochial clergy, still less is there a body of clergy supported by tithe. In the *Black Book of St. David*, an extent of the possessions of the see of St. David's, at the close of the first quarter of the fourteenth century, the manors and lands belonging to the see are described with the greatest minuteness, but there is only slight mention of tithe as belonging to the possessions of the see of St. David's. The evidence of these two records, the *Liber Landavensis* and the *Black Book*, one for each of the two South Wales dioceses, are against the existence of a parochial clergy supported by tithes, and the Welsh codes confirm this view. It is, therefore, probable that the Celtic Church of Wales did not derive its maintenance from tithes, but from other sources. Except from the strong inference derived from the fact that the endowments of the Celtic Church in Wales were on a different basis from those of the Latin and Anglican churches, the point would have been of small importance. It would have been at most an anomaly requiring some explanation. But this fact has been used by modern defenders of the faith, or rather, of the Anglican establishment in Wales, as a ground for putting forward a wholly untenable proposition. Modern writers on Welsh Church history say, and repeat

the assertion, that the Reformation was to the last degree financially disastrous to the Welsh Church, as the tithes belonging to the church, which the monasteries had appropriated, were taken from the monasteries, and instead of being restored to the Church were handed over to the royal grantees. The monks are said to have plundered the parochial clergy, and the crown to have plundered the monks.[1] Before this kind of statement is accepted as fact, it has to be proved that the parochial clergy ever possessed the tithe of which the monks are accused of plundering them. It is true that the way in which the Reformation was carried out was most prejudicial, not only to the Church in Wales, but also to the Church in England; but this is a long way from proving that the parochial clergy in Wales ever had the tithes that were confiscated from the monasteries by the crown at the Reformation.

The distinction which has already been pointed out between Goidel and Brython, with reference to the conversion of Wales to Christianity, doubtless, to some extent, also influenced the acquisition of property by the Church. The ideas of the tribes of the two races differed. The Brython tried to treat Christianity as a system opposed to any existing system; the Goidel regarded it as something to be assimilated into the existing system. The *Liber Landavensis* contains ample evidence that one use the Teilo monks made of Christianity was as a means of spoiling the Welsh chiefs. The early *Pœnitentials* state the punishment for certain crimes which the Teilo monks enforced—as, for instance, in the case of homicide, where the Welsh canons prescribe a fine of three male and three female slaves.[2] When a Welsh prince committed

[1] See Bevan, *Diocesan History of St. David's*, 161; Newell's *History of the Welsh Church*, 109.

[2] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 127.

murder, as in the case of Arthmail, king of Gwent, who murdered his brother, the bishop is said to have held a synod, and placed the king under synodical censure, and only granted him absolution, and removed the censure, on receiving evidence of repentance in the shape of a grant of land.[1] The wail of Gildas as to the growing iniquity of the country to some extent supports the view that the Brython did not regard the Welsh as "God's creatures", nor did the Brythonic monks. But the Goidel and Goidelic monks utilized Welsh crime for the purpose of enriching their monasteries. These grants also explain a fact in the dealings of the Goidel with Christianity. It will be remembered how Patrick tried to make death the punishment for homicide, and how he failed. So in Wales, Christianity had to adopt local views and prejudices. Whether there was ever a contest between Christian and Pagan, as in the death of Conchobar, we do not know, but the practical result was the same. The Church accepted the tribal penalty, the old heathen penalty, for murder, and the proceeds of the penalty went to form part of the endowments of the Church.

In considering the evidence of Church endowments that the *Book of Llandaff* furnishes, it must be remembered that such evidence is quite independent of the fact whether the documents in that record, are, or are not, genuine. It may, for this purpose, be admitted they are not, that is, they are not documents made by the Welsh princes at the date they purport to bear; but even if forgeries, they are yet documents of a certain age, at least of the twelfth century, and are doubtless based upon the traditions that were at that time current in the monastery, and in the district, as to the rights of the house of Teilo, so as to account for how the monastery became possessed of the

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, p. 233.

lands named in them. Their importance for this purpose, consists in the fact that in accordance with the then current traditions, even when narrated by Latin monks, the Llandaff house obtained its possessions by grants from the Welsh chieftains—grants made for two reasons, piety or penance. The chiefs parted freely with what they had to give; the monks appear to have had but small scruples in accepting what was given. The gifts include all kinds of property—lands, villages, waters, fisheries; but in all the gifts, one form of property, which it would have been expected to be constantly included, is conspicuous by its absence—tithes. If the Welsh chiefs could have given tithes, that is, if they had known what tithes were, it is almost incredible but that the Welsh monks would have prevailed upon them to give them tithes in some of the cases mentioned. The more these gifts are studied, the more remarkable does their form appear, not only in what they give, but in the way it is given. The chief could not by his own act alienate tribal property, he could only do it with the assent of the tribe, and if the tribe could have retained their property, and only made a small money payment out of it, it is difficult to believe that they would not in some cases have done so. But of this there is no trace. The dead hand of the monastery closed on the property of the tribe, of whatever nature or kind it might be. The Church acquired all sorts and conditions of possessions, with the single exception of tithe. If may be said, in answer to this view, that the chiefs did not give the tithe because it was not theirs to give—that it already belonged to the Church and the clergy, and, not being tribal property, when a gift of that property was made to the monastery, it could not be included. But the answer to this is two-fold: (1) There is not the slightest evidence that tithe was ever paid in

Wales by laymen to the Church at this date, and if it was not, it is not easy to see how the Church ever acquired it, as a payment by the tribe out of tribal property could only be made with the assent of the tribe, and some evidence, some allusion to such payment being made, would almost necessarily be forthcoming; and (2) in the list of Church property belonging to the St. David's monastery in the *Black Book*, there is no mention of tithes. It is not conceivable that if at that time tithe was the property of the Church, the two largest and most important of the South Wales houses should be without any. That the Llandaff house, whose history we have, and the account of how it went on acquiring property and heaping up riches for four to five hundred years, should yet show no traces of ever acquiring tithe, is most singular. The only conclusion that can be arrived at is, that the reason why, among the property of the Church, there is no mention of tithe in grants to the Church or in the list of the possessions of the Church, is, that tithes were a form of property the Church of that day did not possess. No one who reads either the *Liber Landavensis* or the *Black Book*, but will see that neither church lacked endowments or property; what each did lack was tithe. This view is strengthened by reference to another document, the genuineness of which is above suspicion—the *Valor* of Pope Nicholas IV, of 1291. In the dioceses of Llandaff, St. David's, and Bangor, the full value of the different benefices is given, and of the tenth granted to the crown, but there is no entry or memorandum to show that there is any tithe. In the diocese of St. Asaph the case is different. Here, the value of each benefice is divided between the rector and the vicar, and a charge is made upon both. At first sight it is difficult to account for this; but the probable explanation is, that the Latin

system of tithe, and the division between the rector and vicar, was gradually spreading over Wales; and in the diocese of St. Asaph, being more directly under English influence, it had spread there more rapidly than elsewhere; that in the other Welsh dioceses it had not, at the date of the *Valor*, become an established fact, whatever it became afterwards. This would point to the conclusion, which all the Welsh evidence tends to force upon us, that the early endowments of the Welsh churches were not tithes. That they were amply endowed before the date when tithe, as a legal payment, was payable in Wales is clear, as is the fact that the payment of tithe is a matter of comparatively modern date, and was not one of the early forms of property of which the Welsh Church were the owners. Tithes, as a compulsory legal payment to the Church, were not known in Wales before the time of the Latin monks, they introduced them, and they reaped the benefit of their introduction. If this is so, it acquits them of the crime usually laid to their charge—of appropriating the revenues of the parochial clergy. The Latin monks were not an over scrupulous body, but even they could hardly take away from the parochial clergy what it is doubtful if the clergy ever possessed.

The question as to the endowments of the Celtic Church is one of such importance that it is necessary to examine it in some detail. Tithes, in the modern sense of the word, as a legal payment in support of the Church from the lay occupiers and owners of land, was not probably recognized as a legal obligation by the Western Church earlier than the eighth century. It is true that the right of the Church to tithes is mentioned in the decrees of Councils in the sixth century. One of the early instances being the decrees of the Council of Tours, in 567, when

the faithful were admonished to pay tithes.[1] But it does not appear that at that time the payment of the tithe of increase formed more than a moral obligation. Charlemagne, in 779, made the payment of tithe compulsory in the Frank kingdom,[2] and the establishment of the right in England is usually said to have followed from this. Archbishop Theodore assumed it was the duty of every Christian, as such, to pay tithe.[3] The Legatine report of 787, whose articles were taken as binding by the kings and witan of Mercia and Northumbria, laid it down in the seventeenth canon, "Ut omnes studeant de omnibus quæ possident decimas dare quia speciale Domini Dei est et de novem partibus sibi vivat".[4] This canon is said, by Haddan and Stubbs,[5] to have been the enactment that imposed the legal obligation for the payment of tithe in England. It is, however, usually said,[6] that the legal obligation to pay tithe arose under the grant of Ethelwulf, in 855. But this is denied by Kemble and others, as, at the time of the supposed grant, the tithes were not Ethelwulf's to give, and that, whatever was the effect of his grant, it only applied to Wessex. For the present purpose it may be taken that even in England, under the Latin Church, the legal payment of tithes, as opposed to what, by the force of moral persuasion and supernatural terror, the clergy could get, was not general till about the ninth century, if so early. It may, therefore, be assumed that if the legal payment of tithes did not exist in England before the ninth century, it did not exist in Wales until later, for no one has yet put forward the idea that the payment of tithes was of Celtic origin. If, then, the legal payment of tithes in the Latin Church in

[1] Labbe, *Conc.*, v, 868.
[2] *Capitt* (ed. Baluze), i, 141.
[3] *Pœnit.*, c. 11, ii, sec. 8.
[4] Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, iii, p. 456.
[5] *H. and S.*, iii, p. 637.
[6] Selden, *History of Tithes.*

England did not begin until the ninth century, and probably not in Wales until a later date, it would be unreasonable to expect to find much about them in the Welsh codes, for the date of the Whitland assembly, at which Hywel Da's laws were compiled, is put down as the beginning of the tenth century. As, therefore, it is shown that the legal payment of tithes, if it existed at all, which is most doubtful, only came into existence shortly before the Whitland meeting, it is no matter for surprise that the mention of tithes in the Welsh codes is so slight. Had it been otherwise, it would have shown that the codes were either forgeries, or else greatly interpolated. The same remark applies to the *Liber Landavensis*; the mention of tithes in the earlier charters would have been the one thing required to show that those charters were forgeries; as it is, their silence as to tithes is the strongest internal evidence as to their genuineness. It is true that both in the Irish and Welsh laws allusion is made to the payment of tithe, but such payment, so far as relates to the Church, is certainly an interpolation of a later date. One of the results of the invasion of Wales by the Normans and the Latin clergy was the payment of tithes being enforced as a fixed payment to the clergy, and it may be taken as clear that the general levy of tithes for ecclesiastical purposes is one of the things that the Welsh owe to the Normans.

At some time, between the time of Hywel Da and the conquest of Wales by Edward, tithes had become payable as part of the new ecclesiastical system of the country. The greater part of them was paid, not to the clergy, but to the Latin monasteries; and they acquired, or claimed to have acquired, from the Welsh, grants of the tithe payable out of certain districts, but these tithes were a mere payment imposed on the Welsh by the conqueror, and were not one of the incidents of the native Church of

Wales. The conqueror imposed them on the conquered as a mark of his victory and of their subjection. Whatever else Wales owes to the Normans and the Plantagenets, she certainly owes the general legal imposition of tithes. The payment of tithes may be of scriptural authority, but the payment of tithes in Wales is the mark that remains to this day of the conquest of the Celtic Church by the Latin. If the present condition of the tithes in Wales is looked at, it will be found how fully this statement is borne out. It is rather remarkable that out of the amount of the tithes payable in Wales and Monmouth, the clergy only get £160,000; the balance is in lay hands, that is, it was in the hands of Latin monks at the Reformation. If tithes had been, in their origin, a payment to which the Welsh were accustomed, such a state of things as this would have been quite impossible. The Latin monks were strong enough to enforce payment, and they did enforce it, but their successors had neither the courage nor the skill of the Latin monks, and have weakened their position by asserting a fictitious origin for the liability to pay tithe in Wales, and have relied on force rather than on fact.

If, then, tithes did not form the source on which the Celtic Church relied for its support, it will be asked, What had that church to depend upon for its sustenance? The answer is not far to seek- land. The territorial possessions of the Welsh Church, were—it may be said—very large, and it has been throughout her history, more on the ownership of land than upon anything else that she has had to rely. After all the changes through which she has passed, the amount of glebe held by the Welsh Church is no less than 45,000 acres. And as a broad rule the more Welsh the district in which a church is situated, the larger the amount of glebe. Thus, in Glamorganshire, where there were extensive Norman settlements, the amount of glebe

is only 3,792 acres. But in Cardiganshire, the most Welsh of all the Welsh counties, it is over 6,000, and in Carmarthenshire 6,800 acres. The same holds good in North Wales. In Anglesea, in the diocese of Bangor, there are 1,382 acres of glebe, while in Flint, in the diocese of St. Asaph, on the English border, only 748 acres. Fortunately sufficient documents relating to the history of the Welsh Church have come down to us to enable it to be stated with precision how it was that the Welsh Church obtained so large an amount of glebe. The earliest extant document relating to the Welsh Church is the *Book of St. Chad*, a MS. of the Gospels that formerly belonged to Llandaff, but which before the year 973 was taken to Lichfield. On the margin of the MS. are written, in a hand which experts say is of the early part of the ninth century, various memoranda of grants made to the Church. These entries contain, amongst others,[1] the grant of a certain *Trewyddog* which Rhys and the family of Grethi gave to God and St. Teilo, which produced two score loaves and a wether in summer, and forty loaves, a sow, and two score dishes of butter in winter. That is, when this place was handed over from the tribe of the land to the tribe of the Saint, the dwellers upon it paid to the chief of the land so much food; they had then to pay it to the tribe of St. Teilo. The *Book of Llandaff* abounds with entries of the transfer by the chief of the tribe of the land and the tribesmen to the tribe of the Saint; and the records of St. Cadoc prove the same thing, that the early endowments of the Welsh Church were grants, by the Welsh princes, either to the monastery or to the head of the monastery, of certain interests in the land, such as so much food, usually provisions for so many nights, the chieftain retaining the possession of the land subject to

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, p. 272; *Llyvyr Teilo*, xiv.

the payment to the church, or an absolute grant of the land and all belonging to it to the church. The first class comes nearest to a grant of tithes, but it was, in fact, very different. It was merely giving to the church the rights the chiefs had had in Wales from the earliest times of being supported by their tribesmen. Certain districts were liable, when the chief visited them, either for pleasure when hunting, or for business when fighting, to find the king provisions for so many days; this duty fell on the tribesmen; the serfs had to find, that is, to erect, suitable lodgings. This obligation of the lay tribe, in the course of time, became commuted into a right, first to receive a fixed quantity of victuals every year, whether the king went there or not, and then, later, to the right to receive, instead of food, a money payment. It will be thus seen that there were three successive stages in the chieftain's rights. First, it was the right, on visiting the district, to be maintained by the district. The *Dimetian Code*, after stating what the village (*trev*) was to give the king, adds, "that the *trev* is to bring all these to the king and to light a fire three nights and three days for him,"[1] thus showing that it was the duty of each *trev* to keep the chieftain for a definite time. In the next stage, the right of sustenance is commuted into the obligation to find certain defined provisions for the chief. These differed in summer and in winter, but at each season certain fixed kinds of food were to be provided.[2] Then came the third change; if the *trev* did not find the provisions, it found money wherewith the chief could get them himself. "The worth of a king's *gwestva* is a pound, six score pence for his bread, three score for his *enllyn*, and three score for his liquor, that is, if his *gwestva* be not at once supplied."[3] It will be seen that each article was now

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i. 532. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

valued at a fixed sum, and the payment could be made in either kind or money; and the final stage was reached when the whole obligation was turned into a fixed money payment. These rights of maintenance that the chief possessed, and could enforce against the tribe, seem to be as old as anything in the Welsh laws. The process of commutation into a fixed money payment appears to have been gradual, but at last it was complete. When this took place the revenue of the Welsh chieftains was derived from their own lands, and from what they got for their rights of maintenance. The liability to contribute to the chieftain's maintenance seems to have been a fixed and defined right. The *trev* which paid *gwestva* consisted of a defined area. "Four *randirs* are to be in the *trev* from which the king's *gwestva* is to be paid."[1] Whether all the country was divided up in this way may be doubtful; the importance of the point is that the chief drew a stated sum from a certain area. As has been said, the earliest extant record of the Welsh Church, the *Book of St. Chad*, contains memoranda of the grants, by lay chiefs and the lay tribes, of these fixed supplies of food before they had been commuted into money payments to the church of Llandaff, and doubtless these instances are only examples of what went on all over Wales; the churches, or, rather, the monasteries, gradually acquired a certain share of the provision that had been made for the support of the lay chieftain, a provision that ultimately took the form of a definite money payment of a fixed sum from a defined area.

Probably these food rights—whether commuted or not, does not seem to be of great importance—formed the origin of the subsequent payment of tithes to the Welsh Celtic monasteries. The payment would be made; the Latin would not care to investigate why or wherefore the

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 532.

payment was made as long as the fact of making it was clear. He would attribute its origin to a different source, and call the payment by a different name, or would very probably utilize it as the basis of enforcing his own ideas of payment in the shape of tithe. To the Welsh peasant or serf, who had to make the payment, it did not much matter if the pig, or calf, or sheep that he had to give the monastery was called by a Welsh or a Latin name, *gwestva* or *degwm*; and it was most probably in this way, by the aid of the old local national payment, that the idea of paying a definite sum out of a defined area to the church arose, and was carried out.

So far the *gwestva* has been spoken of as a payment to the chief, and this was probably the result of it being derived from the liability of the tribe to support the chief, but it was not only the chief who had the right to *gwestva* when in the early times it represented the supply of provisions. All those with the chief had a right to share in the supply, so when it was commuted into a defined payment in kind the officers of the Court had a right to share in the food; and when, still later, it became a fixed money payment, the *gwestva* silver did not become the absolute property of the chief, but had to be shared with his officers, his tribesmen. The officer whose duty it was to divide the *gwestva* silver was the steward,[1] and he divided it up among certain of the officers of the Court in fixed shares.[2] It will be therefore seen that the chieftain could not alienate this payment without the assent of those who were interested in it; but this is only another form of stating the proposition so often stated before, that the tribal property could only be granted with the assent of the tribe, and probably the names of the witnesses which are found to the charters in the *Liber*

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 669. [2] *Ibid.*, 670.

Landavensis are the names of the tribesmen who were interested in, and so had to concur in, the grant to the church. On the monastery obtaining this grant, the tribe of the Saint held it, just as it had been held by the tribe of the land. It was not the exclusive property of the abbot, or of any member, but fell into the common fund, and formed part of the common property of the tribe of the Saint. Each member of the tribe was entitled to share in it, for the reason that he was a tribesman, and so had a right to it. These food rents, of which the Church became possessed by grant, probably form the origin of the claim of the Welsh clergy to tithes. When the monastery was entitled to receive from every village a certain number of cows, pigs, or sheep in a year for their support, the right has a very strong resemblance to tithes. That it was not tithes is shown from the fact of the existence of the right to food rents in Wales before tithes were ever heard of. But the two rights were very similar, and when the Latin got the upper hand, the ecclesiastic, whether regular or secular, when urging and enforcing the payment of tithes, could say, and probably did say, that he was only enforcing the rights of his monastery or of his predecessors, rights which had always existed, and which it was his duty to maintain. The fact that he called them by another name from what they were locally known by could make no possible difference, no more than at the present day the Welsh speak of *degwm*, the English of tithes.

Viewed from this point, the right of the owner of tithe in Wales, if tithe is only an adoption of the old *gwestva*, is far stronger than in the way the case is usually stated. It may be sacrilegious to deny the divine origin of tithe in Wales, but it greatly strengthens the right of the owner to be able to say, the liability to make this payment is one of the oldest incidents known to the holding of land in the

country; it is a survival of the old Welsh custom and the old Welsh law. It was originally a payment to the local chief; it is now a payment to the local resident, whether he is lay or clerical; and, allowing for the changes the lapse of time has produced, it fairly represents the old Celtic liability of the tribesmen to their rulers. It is true that the system of paying tithe was probably largely extended and amplified by Latin monks, and the whole basis on which the old right to receive food rents rested was changed; yet still the origin of the idea is the same, and the present payment of tithe represents the old *gwestva* or food rents, one of the most ancient, if not the most ancient, of existing Welsh survivals.

Against this view is to be set the fact that in the codes mention is made both of the *gwestva* and of tithes, and they appear to have existed at the same time, and to have been very different payments. This must be admitted. Tithes are mentioned in the Welsh codes as well as food rents, but the tithes of the Welsh codes and the modern tithes appear to be two totally different things. The tithes spoken of in the codes are, as a rule, a payment, not to the Church, or to any ecclesiastical body, but to the king or chief. The king's priest of the household had, among other emoluments, one third of the king's tithes,[1] and the queen's priest of the household one third of her tithes.[2] The codes are, however, silent upon the point as to from what source the king's and queen's tithes were drawn,—who paid it, out of what it was paid. The later laws give a little, but a very little, more light on this. Three persons, says the *Cyvreithiau Cymru*,[3] are to have tithes: "a priest, a judge, and an informant. A judge is to have the tenth penny of what he shall adjudge, excepting for land, and theft and homicide, and for each of these he is

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 19, 638. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 52. [3] *Ibid.*, ii, 328.

to have twenty-four pence; an informant is to have the tenth penny of what he shall discover; a priest is to have Christ's tithe." Although this does not give very much information, it does show this, that the word tithe, as used in the Welsh laws, had a very different meaning from what it has in English and Latin; that whatever may be its precise significance, it did not express exclusively a payment by the laity for the support of ecclesiastics. In another passage it is stated:[1] "Three persons to whom a tenth is assigned, to the ministers of Christ their tithe," and a judge and an informer the tenth penny, except in certain cases. Here, again, it is not at all certain what was the tithe the minister of the church possessed. It may bear some relation to tithe as understood in the Latin Church, but it does not say so. The last entry as to tithe is one that states the seven suits of the church that take precedence of those of the Court, and the first of these is suits for tithe.[2] In the *Leges Wallice* it is said, "Tribus debetur decimus denarius silicet sacerdoti, judici, et animalium liberatori."[3] This does not carry the matter much farther, but it will be seen from these extracts from the Welsh laws as to tithes, that if the matter rested there, the owners of tithe would have but a very slender basis on which to rest their case. It may be said that it is quite clear that the Welsh idea of tithe included most, if not all, cases in which officials received percentages, and that the term "tithe" is used to designate these percentages. From whom or upon what the clergy received their percentages is not clear, but the passages, assuming that they are genuine, and have not been interpolated, which seems by no means unlikely, do not in any way establish the right of the Church to the tithe of increase as claimed by the Latin clergy. It may well be, as the payment of tithe

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, ii, 380. [2] *Ibid.*, ii, 367. [3] *Ibid.*, ii, 873.

to clergy is only met with in the later laws, after the Norman influence was felt, that tithes had already been enforced by the clergy, and this was only put in as a statement of the legal right. It is hard to believe if tithes, in the Latin sense, were payable in Wales when the laws were made, that measures that go into such minute details as the Welsh codes and laws, should on so important a subject have been content with the vaguest generalities. The obvious conclusion forced upon us is that tithe, in its usually accepted sense, was not actually at the time the codes were compiled—probably not when the laws were drawn up—established throughout Wales as a legal system of universal obligation. If the view here put forward, that the tithe system we afterwards find in force was but the adaptation of the old *gwestva*, the silence of the laws is fully explained. The provisions in the laws as to the *gwestva* are most elaborate and minute, and no fresh provisions would be needed in respect of it under whatever name it was known and enforced.

This view as to tithes is rather borne out by the Irish laws. The most modern date given to the *Senchus Mor* is by Dr. Todd, who puts it as not later than the ninth or tenth century,[1] that is, long before tithes, as understood in the Latin Church, had been heard of in Ireland, their introduction being usually assigned to the synod of Cashel, in 1172. Yet the *Senchus Mor* mentions tithes very much in the same general terms as the Welsh laws. "Three things which prevent the worthlessness of the world—tithes, first-fruits, and alms."[2] The gloss is curious; it says, "Tithes, *i.e.*, in a fixed amount"; and in another place, where tithes are spoken of as due to the Church, the gloss says, "with definiteness",[3] thereby

[1] *St. Patrick*, 484.

[2] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., iii, 13.

[3] *Ibid.*, iii, 35.

showing that when the words were inserted there was a resistance going on by the laity to the efforts of the clergy to extend the payment of tithes. It should, however, be noticed that the Irish codes, under the head of firstlings, contain a statement that may fairly be read as showing that, at the date at which it was written, the tithe of increase was paid in the Irish church.[1]

Such, then, is the position as to tithe in the Irish and Welsh Churches. It may be fairly assumed that, originally, tithe, in the sense known to the Latin Church, as a compulsory legal payment to the Church, was unknown to the Celtic Church; that probably it was, in its Latin form, introduced at about the same period in the twelfth century into both the Welsh and Irish Churches. In Wales, an ancient native custom was taken hold of and adopted as the basis for the extension of the tithe system, and that, in its modern form in the Celtic system, represents the old tribal payments to the chief. This view will also account for the fact that the local churches obtained so small a share of tithe. As has been pointed out, the local churches were colonies from the monasteries, and their possessions were really the possessions of the mother house. A local chief who granted food rents to the church would, as a rule, be more likely to grant them to a powerful monastery that could help him, not only by the spiritual arm, but also, if necessary, by the temporal arm as well, than to a poor offshoot of the monastery, whose chief help would be their prayers, and not temporal support. In some cases the colony might have conferred some signal favour on the chief, and, in return, he would show his gratitude, or his fear, by making a grant of food rents to them, and not to the mother house. These cases would account for the tithes that the local churches

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, Rolls ed., iii, 41.

possessed, and the reason why they got so little. They were not robbed, as is usually said, because they never had anything to be robbed of.

If the Celtic Church in Wales was not rich in tithes through the fears or the liberality of the Welsh princes, she was fairly rich in glebe and lands, and from these her income was well maintained. The *Valor* of Pope Nicholas gives the following figures as the income of her benefices:—

	£
St. David's	2,280
Llandaff	1,154
St. Asaph	1,332
Bangor	698
	£5.464

This is the income of the local churches, not of the religious houses, and, although it is less than in some of the English dioceses where the Latin system of tithes had been long in operation, yet, when it is remembered that a greater part is derived from glebe, it will be seen what a large extent of land the Church had acquired. Assuming money to have been worth twenty times what is its present value, the aggregate of the income of the Welsh beneficed clergy then was no less than £89,360, or say £90,000, and this is leaving out of account the income of the bishops, ecclesiastical officials, and of the monastic houses. Those who know what area in Wales it takes at the present day to secure an income of £90,000 a year, will be best able to realise how well the Church was endowed, and how extensive a landowner she was.

The next point to consider is how she was able to acquire so large an acreage. In Wales, when the tribal system had become relaxed, there were no restrictions

in force to prevent the chief endowing the Church with as much land as she pleased. She was not slow to avail herself of her privileges. From the *Liber Landavensis* it will be seen how lands were granted by the Welsh princes to the Church, and how the Llandaff monks never lost an opportunity of obtaining fresh grants and of enlarging their borders. Whether it was for the health of the donor's soul, or to obtain pardon for sins, or as a penance for some great crime, or for some other cause, no occasion was omitted that would enable a new grant to be obtained. Naturally, in this way the lands the Church held had a tendency to increase. The Normans, in this respect, and, perhaps, only in this respect, followed in the footsteps of the Celts, and with such success that at the Reformation the Church was, most probably, far the largest landowner in Wales. The grants were of two kinds: (1) Gifts to an individual, such as the head of the house of Teilo, and (2) gifts to a particular church. The gifts were treated in different ways. A gift to an individual, such as a gift to the head of the Teilo house, in whatever way that head might be described, was treated as a direct gift to the Llandaff monastery, and became part of its possessions; but a gift of a place on which to build a church was otherwise dealt with. The monastery took possession of the gift, and put some of its members there to build the church, and to discharge the necessary duties, one of which would be the performance of Divine worship. The monks sent, probably both performed Divine worship and acted as bailiffs for the monastery, retaining sufficient, or what was then deemed sufficient, of the profits, to keep body and soul together, and remitting the rest to the monastery as part of its revenue. That this system prevailed largely in Wales is proved from the fact of the number of

vicarages to be found there, as opposed to rectories. Out of the 1,035 parishes in Wales and Monmouthshire, there are 734 vicarages to 301 rectories; that is, the system of monastic settlements prevailed in no less than 734 cases. To see to what extent this was the case, it will be well to look at the number in each county:—

County.	Vicarages.	Rectories.	Parishes.
Anglesea	30 ...	17 ...	47
Brecon	51 ...	21 ...	72
Cardigan	54 ...	13 ...	67
Carmarthen ...	74 ...	11 ...	85
Carnarvon	41 ...	22 ...	63
Denbigh	63 ...	27 ...	90
Flint	48 ...	9 ...	57
Glamorgan	95 ...	43 ...	138
Monmouth	96 ...	35 ...	131
Montgomery ...	54 ...	25 ...	79
Merioneth	25 ...	18 ...	43
Pembroke	73 ...	46 ...	119
Radnor	30 ...	14 ...	44
	734 ...	401 ...	1,035

It will be thus seen that in the Welsh parts of Wales the system was more prevalent than in the English; and that, so far as the Celts were concerned, this was the way the Church was established and endowed. The monks on the spot took what they could make out of the lands they held and cultivated, and paid over to the monastery the moneys or rents they received from the dwellers on the other lands they did not cultivate themselves. When the parochial system was fully established, the produce of the land cultivated by the monks, and which had maintained the monks, became the source from which the local priest derived his income, that is, it was the endowment of the living. It was not tithe on which the Welsh clergy relied for support, as they never had it; what they did have was the produce of the land the monastic colony cultivated,

and this land became regarded as the endowment of the local church, the source from whence the local priest derived his means of support. Up to our own time the Welsh parochial clergy are largely dependent on glebe, and the moneys arising from glebe, and glebe is only the modern term for the lands that the monkish settlers originally occupied, and out of which they sustained themselves as the priests of the local churches. The Welsh Church, including Monmouthshire, at the present day, possesses no less than 43,437 acres, of land, and has a rental from lands and houses of £39,306.[1] Having regard to how she has been plundered and robbed by bishops, deans, and chapters, and all who had the opportunity, these figures show in the most striking way what splendid endowments she must have at one time possessed. But these figures only show the estates of the local clergy, that is, the portion of the lands given to the old monasteries that the monkish colonists cultivated for their own support; it leaves out of sight all notice of the lands that the monasteries retained for their own use or received the revenues of, from or through their monkish colonies. These have a history of their own that will be told presently.

The parochial part of the question requires a further examination. If the details of the property belonging to the local clergy are examined, it will be found that where the English settlements were most powerful and numerous, there the land endowments of the Church were the least; for instance, in the counties of Flint, Denbigh, and Radnor, which were counties peculiarly under English jurisdiction, the amount of glebe is very small, while in Brecon, Cardigan, and Carmarthen counties, fairly free from English influence, the amount is large. It also appears that

[1] *Return*, House of Commons Paper 240, 1894.

where the glebe is large the tithe is small, which is only another way of stating the previous proposition, that where the Welsh were left undisturbed, the old Welsh system of the clergy supported by glebe prevailed; but where the foreign or English system gained the ascendant, there their mode of supporting the clergy by tithe, rather than by glebe, prevailed. That is, where the Celtic monastic system did not exist, or was got rid of, another mode of supporting the local clergy than by the produce of the land they cultivated had to be found, and this was found in the Latin system of tithes, a system which supplanted the glebe system in the English districts, but did not supplant, but only supplemented it, where the Welsh held their own. A reference to the following table proves this very clearly :—

County.	Parishes.	Glebe. A. R. P.	Rent of Lands and Houses. £	Tithes. £
Anglesea ...	47 ...	1,382 3 7 ...	1,415 ...	11,699
Brecon ...	72 ...	4,424 0 22 ...	2,785 ...	12,742
Cardigan ...	67 ...	6,018 0 9 ...	3,773 ...	6,812
Carmarthen...	85 ...	6,822 0 37 ...	4,746 ...	8,423
Carnarvon ...	63 ...	2,377 2 31 ...	1,759 ...	12,195
Denbigh ...	90 ...	2,213 1 14 ...	2,911 ...	22,278
Flint ...	57 ...	748 2 15 ...	1,979 ...	14,562
Glamorgan ...	138 ...	3,792 3 14 ...	5,102 ...	19,199
Merioneth ...	43 ...	983 0 20 ...	614 ...	7,819
Montgomery	79 ...	1,690 1 20 ...	1,587 ...	17,327
Monmouth ...	131 ...	5,236 1 8 ...	6,982 ...	19,167
Pembroke ...	119 ...	6,191 1 5 ...	6,106 ...	17,264
Radnor ...	44 ...	1,556 3 7 ...	1,347 ...	8,027
	1,035 ...	43,437 2 9 ...	£39,306 ...	£179,914

This shows that the counties where there are the most, and the smallest, parishes, the Latin system of a tithe-supported clergy obtained, while where the parishes are fewer and larger, where the Celt held his own, the old Celtic monastic system still continued. Monmouth and Pembroke are the strongest cases in support of the view

that small parishes mean Latin predominance; Cardigan and Carmarthen, the strongest in support of the view that large parishes mean Celtic resistance.

This view was to some extent put forward by Rees. He argues that the richer churches in Wales were the older foundations, as they drew their tithes from larger areas; and he goes on to say, that there are districts in the Principality where the system is "broken up and the country studded with numerous churches, all of them small rectories, as if the chapelries which before existed have been converted into separate benefices. A slight acquaintance with the history of these localities will show that the new arrangement was the result of foreign conquest. These churches are principally found in the southern part of Pembrokeshire, occupied by a colony of Flemings about 1100, in the vale of Glamorgan conquered by Norman adventurers about 1090, and on the borders of England; while the system of subordinate chapelries is most perfect in those parts of the country where the independence of the native was of longest continuance."[1] Rees thus arrives at the same conclusion by a different process of reasoning, that the Celtic system is shown to have held its ground longest where the English, that is, the Latin, influence was weakest. He does not, it is true, advance the idea that the provision for the clergy in the Latin and Celtic Churches was different, nor does he notice the fact of the endowment by glebe being so much greater in the Welsh districts, and the endowment by tithes so much more in the English districts. But there must have been some reason for this distinction, it is too marked to be accidental; and the point he notes, the preponderance of rectories over vicarages in the Latin districts, and of vicarages over rectories in the Welsh,

[1] *Welsh Saints*, p. 15.

must be due to some cause; Rees attributes it, and rightly, to foreign influence. But this influence made itself felt in a different way from what Rees imagined. The influence led to the introduction of tithe as a payment for the support of the clergy in so far as it was so applied, not as he seems to think, in the establishment of rectories as opposed to vicarages. It did lead to the establishment of rectories, because the incumbent of a parish had, up till then, received no tithes; and also to the establishment of vicarages, because in many cases the new payment went, if not wholly, at least nearly so, to the support of some Latin religious house, and not to the local priest. In a sense it is therefore true, that the foreign influence meant the creation of rectories, and also the appropriation of tithes, but not in the sense in which the words are usually used. It was not that the tithes that had previously belonged to the Church were taken from it, or, that what had previously belonged to the monastery was given to the Church. What was done by the foreign influence was, that the country was made liable to a new payment for clerical purposes where the Latin clergy prevailed, and the persons who were the orginators of such payments managed to keep them for themselves. Whether as rector of some rectory in the part of Wales under Norman influence, or whether as the inmate of some Norman monastery which bore witness to the piety or pride of the Norman Conqueror, the new payment was one that went, not to the clergy of Wales, as a body, but to the clergy and monasteries the Latin selected.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to say when the payment of tithes became general in Wales. It certainly was not so at the time of the first Norman bishops, nor does it appear to have been so, except in the diocese of St. Asaph, at the beginning of the fourteenth century. In the two

hundred and thirty years that followed, to the Reformation, it became so to a certain extent. But, as is universally admitted, at the Reformation the great bulk of the Welsh tithe belonged, not to the parochial clergy, but to the monasteries. As has been pointed out, modern writers, reasoning from the assumption that, as in England, the Latin monasteries appropriated the tithes, leaving the parochial clergy with only a small portion, infer that the same was done in Wales. But as has been shown, the introduction of tithe, as an ecclesiastical payment in Wales, was long after the Welsh churches were endowed, and the Latins who introduced it kept it for themselves, and did not hand it over to the Celtic clergy. How little tithe was the property of the clergy at the Reformation is shown from the amount of tithe that passed to the Crown, and is now in lay hands, or, rather, in non-ecclesiastical hands. Nothing could show more plainly than these figures that it was not on tithes that the Welsh clergy relied for support. Glebe has always been their great source of income, and the reason for it is that glebe formed the ancient endowment. Tithes are a more recent imposition.

The distribution of the quantity of tithes in non-ecclesiastical hands is important as throwing light on the view put forward, that tithes were the result of Norman or Latin influence; that where that influence was the strongest, there the tithe was most rigidly enforced; that where the Welsh remained free from foreign interference, there tithe was not so common.

The endowment of the Celtic monasteries is a subject of some difficulty. Originally it would seem that when the lands were granted to the monastery such parts as were not occupied by the monastic colonies contributed to the support of the monastery, at first probably by the system that seems to have been the national system of food rents

(*gwestva*). The Welsh laws provide for the payment to the chief of provisions for a certain number of nights by the members of the tribe. A similar system was adopted by the tribe of the Saint; and probably one of the results of the grant of lands by the Welsh chieftain to the monastery was to transfer the right to these food rents from the chief of the lay tribe to the chief of the ecclesiastical tribe. That such was the case appears from the Cadoc records, where a chief, a prisoner for murder, grants to the monastery certain land and the right to receive the food rents, beer, bread, flesh, and honey from it.[1] Here the lands paid yearly to the monastery or supplied to the monks, when on their journeys, so much provision. This supply would in the course of time, and gradually did, become commuted into a money payment, and formed part of the general property of the monastery, of the tribe of the Saint. A second class of cases was where the land was given and no rights were reserved. Here it became the property of the monastery; the inhabitants were the serfs or slaves of the monastery, and all the produce belonged to them. In this way, either by rent or by ownership, the monasteries acquired considerable wealth. So far as any opinion can now be formed, the tribal rules applied to this property,—all the members of the tribe of the Saint were entitled to share in it: as tribesmen they were entitled to be supported by the tribe, and could claim from the abbot the right to be so. Community of goods would not be the right term to describe this state of things; it would be rather the duty of the abbot to support, and the right of the ecclesiastical tribesman to claim support, as a tribesman, out of the property of the tribe. Such seems to have been the Celtic system: the revenue and the lands were for the benefit of

[1] See Seebohm, *Welsh Tribal System*, 208.

the tribesmen of the Saint. The colonies maintained themselves; all that was not required for this purpose went into the common fund of the monastery for the common benefit of the tribesmen, the *ecclesiastica progenies*. As long as the Celtic Church kept her independence this rule applied, but, on the Normans coming into power, a change was made. The Norman bishop, who took the place of the Celtic abbot, did not admit the right of the tribesman to be kept by the monastery; in his theory each member of the monastery had a duty to do, and for this duty he was to be paid. So a system began under Bernard that did away with the old Celtic ideas. Giraldus says Bernard found no organized internal government. "Clerici namque loci illius qui glaswir id est viri ecclesiastici vocabantur barbaris ritibus absque ordine et regula ecclesiæ bonis enormiter incumbebant."[1] Into the system of tribal religious life Bernard determined to introduce the Latin ideas of a cathedral chapter, ideas that were derived from the Latin system in force on the Continent. He therefore made the monastic body consist, not of the tribe of the Saint, but of a definite number of canons or prebends, to each of whom duties were assigned, and each of whom was entitled to receive a fixed payment out of the revenue or common fund of the monastery. It might be said that he fixed the number of members of the tribe of the Saint, making them a definite, instead of an indefinite, body, and to each he assigned his duties and pay. What remained, the bishop either took for himself, or granted out to retainers for the purpose of forming a military or quasi-military force on which the bishop, the lord bishop, could rely if attacked by Welsh or other enemies. The tribe of the Saint disappears, and its place is taken by a Norman feudal lord at the head of his

[1] *De jure et statu Menevensis Ecclesiæ*, Rolls ed., iii, 153.

military vassals, outside his episcopal establishment, and, at the head of his priests, his ecclesiastical establishment within its walls. Whether the whole of the system was carried out by Bernard it is impossible to say, but this was the system that grew up and formed the constitution of the St. David's chapter. Probably its completion marks the point when the transition from the Celtic monastery into the Norman cathedral chapter was complete, and its completion involved the entire alteration of the St. David's establishment, by the suppression of the Celtic monastery and the foundation of a Latin chapter. As soon as this change was carried out, although when the precise date was cannot be stated, the natural consequences followed. The holder of each of the prebends, or canons, was desirous of increasing his income, and it is now that we find mention of tithe. The right to the tithe seems to have arisen in two ways—(1) by the gift of tithes to a particular prebend, or, perhaps, to speak more accurately, by the holder of the prebend compelling the dweller on the lands allotted to his prebend to pay tithes, that is, by the imposition of a fresh tax by the Latin clergy; and (2), by a gift of tithe to the chapter as a whole, which came to be divided among the different members of the body. As instances of the first class, it seems that those prebends in the chapter that have any endowment, for, from successive enlargements of the chapter, or from some other causes, all the prebends are not endowed, derive their revenues from two sources: (*a*) Lands, that is now, the rent, formerly it would have been the payment in kind; (*b*) lands and tithe, that is, when one holder of the prebend continued to impose on the piety or the superstition of the Welsh chiefs, so as to obtain a grant of the tithe of a particular district, or found himself strong enough to have compelled the inhabitant of a par-

ticular place to pay tithe for his soul's health. And when once the payment could be proved, the Church never allowed it to lapse. In some cases the land has wholly dropped out, and only the tithe remains as the endowment.

The third class of cases is the most interesting: there the prebends divide the tithes of a district between them. Such a district is the parish of St. David's, the parish in which the ecclesiastical establishment was situate, and where, doubtless, the chapter felt strong enough to compel, either by force or fraud, by the temporal or spiritual power, the payment of any tax they imposed, and so the payment of tithes. The fact of the way in which it is divided among all the prebends seems to point to the conclusion that the right to these tithes was acquired after the then existing property of the house had been divided up by Bernard. The parish of St. David's is divided into four townships, *clychs*, circles, or courses—an old Celtic way of dividing property. They are called, Clych y Dref, the town circle, which is the centre; Clych Bychan, or the little circle on the east; Clych Mawr, the great circle on the north; and Clych Gwaelod o Wlad, also called Dewiston, on the sea shore.[1] At a later date, another parish, that of Whitchurch, was added, and made a fifth circle. The whole tithe of the two parishes was divided into fixed portions, or prebends. Six of these the bishop took, and each of the other canons, one; but, at first, each canon, except the archdeacon of Cardigan, who always took his prebend from the Clych Gwaelod Wlad, took his share out of a different *clych* each year, a sort of system of rotation being established—no prebend being payable out of the same *clych* for two successive years. About the middle of the fourteenth century, 1358, the then bishop, Fastolf, divided each *clych* into fixed portions,

[1] *Jones and Freeman*, 9.

and made each canon draw lots for the portion he should get. Clych Mawr and Whitchurch consisted of five portions each, and the two others of six each, but the archdeacon of Cardigan's and the bishop's shares always remained the same. Later, the number of the prebends was further increased, that is, the tithes were divided into more shares.[1] The varying number of members of the chapter, and the addition of new members after the endowments had been appropriated, seem to have led to the fact that certain of the canonries are without endowments. Whether all were ever endowed is doubtful; some probably were, as they have territorial names, and most likely derived in some form revenues from the places by which they are called. The unendowed stalls at St. David's, and elsewhere, are called cursal canons, and at the head of this body at St. David's is the sovereign; why this is so, is one of the points of Welsh Church history on which no two writers agree. The cursal canons at St. Asaph, who have no special endowment, receive payment out of certain tithes (Rhuddlan and Llansilin), in common with other members of the chapter. This fact, that tithes are the mode by which any lack of revenue is supplied, tends to support the argument that the endowment by land was anterior to the endowment by tithes. After the Celtic period, the extensive land grants ceased, and, having been appropriated, there were no more to apply to any new endowment; but, as tithes could be imposed and appropriated when the chapter wanted a source of income for an office, tithe was the source to which they resorted. This is shown further by the fact that when a new officer was created by the chapter, his salary was paid by tithe, not by land. In 1224, Bishop Jowerth appointed a precentor to teach the

[1] *Jones and Freeman*, 313.

choir the Sarum use. He had to be paid, and his salary of ten marks was ordered to be paid out of tithes. "De decimis Prebendarum et commune canonicorum qui non fecerint continuam residentiam in dicta ecclesia donec eidem provisum fuerit."[1] Afterwards two prebends were annexed to the office; then the manor of Trefgarn was given him, and afterwards the great tithes of Lampeter. In 1253, the treasurership was founded,[2] and one of the prebends subsequently appropriated to it. Subsequently this was lost, and the treasurer was paid wholly out of the tithes of two Cardiganshire parishes, Llangranog and Llandisiliogogo. The chancellorship was founded in 1287.[3] The salary was the prebend of Llawhaden, and the profits of a manor which the bishop assigned to it.

It will not be necessary to go further into the St. David's chapter; from what has been said, the following facts appear to be fairly clear: (1) That originally the revenue of the monastery was from food rents, afterwards commuted into money, and the profits of lands that belonged to it; (2) that, after a time, the food rents were commuted into a money payment, and that, at the time when the Celtic monastery passed into the Norman chapter, these payments had been extended into a fixed payment of so much a year from certain defined areas to the St. David's church; (3) that all the members of the church, all the tribe of the Saint, were entitled to share in these payments; (4) that the Normans did away with this common right, and assigned definite shares to certain individuals in return for the performance of definite duties, that is, they appropriated or endowed certain offices with these revenues; (5) that the unappropriated revenues, either arising from fixed

[1] *Jones and Freeman*, 321; quoting *Statutes of St. David's*.
[2] *Jones and Freeman*, 322. [3] *Ibid.*

payments, or from profits of lands, went to the head of the chapter—the bishop; (6) that as new offices were created, the bishop was the person who had to find the money payable for such office, that is, out of the unappropriated revenues which he received, he had to appropriate a part to the new office; (7) that these money payments became known as tithes; (8) that the system of military tenure was introduced as to the lands of the Church, the bishop leasing, or granting, the lands in return for certain fixed services, usually military, by the tenant.

In this way, or in something of the kind, the great change was made from the bishop being the head of the tribe of the Saint into his being a feudal lord—from his having to support the tribesmen, to the tribesmen being entitled to be supported by defined sources of income for doing certain fixed work. They no longer were entitled to support as members of the tribe, but were paid as officers of the chapter, for performing certain duties in it.

What was spoken of as the system at St. David's, seems also to have been the system at the cathedrals of Bangor and St. Asaph. Pope Nicholas' *Valor*,[1] speaking of St. Asaph says, "Ecclesia cathedralis de sancto Asapho cum capellis suis predictis et Canonici in eadem et porciones aliæ omnes taxantur modo subscripto." Then follows a list of fifteen canons, each of whom receives a fixed sum, varying in amount from ten shillings up to thirty-four pounds. To the archdeaconry, a canonry and the living of Abergelev is annexed; and in the church of St. Asaph, and in that of Gwydelwern, some five persons, not members of the chapter, probably five members of the tribe of the Saint, were entitled to share.

[1] Record ed., p. 288.

At Bangor the list is headed,[1] "Taxatio omnium proventuum redditum et obventionum omnium canonicorum Bangorensis," and the property is divided between the deans of Bangor and Arvon, three archdeacons, and six other persons.

The church of St. David's is represented as consisting of twenty-two prebends, each with a fixed income of varying amount. Llandaff had a different system, and one more in accord with the *Liber Landavensis*. It does not appear that the Llandaff revenues were appropriated among the different officers of the chapter, as in the case of the other Welsh cathedrals, nor does it appear that Llandaff possessed any such endowments to appropriate. There seem to have been a certain number of churches belonging to the monastery which formed the endowment of the house, and which the *Valor* says were appropriated to the church of Llandaff. The distinction, therefore, between Llandaff and the other Welsh chapters was this, at Llandaff the members of the chapter were paid, not as members of the chapter, but as priests of certain churches, which they held as members of the chapter, and which formed the endowment of the chapter. In the other chapters the rents and payments to the house are divided up and assigned to certain offices in the chapter. There is another distinction between Llandaff and the other Welsh chapters. The chapter of St. David's appears to have had no temporalities to be taxed. St. Asaph and Bangor possessed a small amount of rent and perquisites that went into the common fund; that is, the system of appropriation was not carried out in either of these churches with the same degree of thoroughness as at St. David's. There all the unappropriated property is said to be "Communia Canonicorum Menevensis,"[2] and of the value

[1] Record ed., p. 290. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

of £1 2*s.* 4½*d.*, probably the *clychs* or circles already mentioned. At Llandaff it was different; the system of endowing the members of the chapter, not with money, but with benefices, was further carried out, and they were paid by specific appropriations of land, not of the rents and profits. A long list is headed "Manors of the Canons and Chapter of Llandaff".[1] The archdeacon had fourteen acres of land, the chancellor twenty, the treasurer thirty-two, the precentor twenty-seven; and then follow certain named individuals who each received the rents from a varying number of acres. The difference in the system at the various cathedrals is most probably to be accounted for by the fact of the different dates at which the appropriations were made. Llandaff was probably the first to make any change from the old monastic system, and probably carried it out before the system of food rents had been elaborated into fixed annual payments, and when her wealth consisted mainly of land, and only of land. The two North Wales cathedrals probably came later, while the change was going on, and their revenues consisted partly of fixed payments, partly of land; while St. David's came last of all, and at the time its revenues were appropriated among the chapter the change had taken place, and a large part of the income was derived from fixed annual payments.

When, in 1835, the Commissioners who were appointed to enquire into the revenues of the Church of England reported, they found that the income of the bishop of St. Asaph was over £7,000 gross, the greater part of which was derived from tithes. Bangor was £6,500, St. David's £2,500, a great portion of which was from fines on the renewals of leases, and Llandaff £1,000 from the same source. To some extent this bears out the *Valor*. St.

[1] Record ed., p. 280.

David's and Llandaff had been feudal lords, and let out the lands of the see at first on military tenure, and, afterwards, this degenerated into ordinary ecclesiastical leaseholds. Bangor seems to have derived her riches from an accidental fact, mines—probably from an application of the law of copyholds, the bishop being the lord of the different manors that belonged to the see. St. Asaph acquired her wealth later. When the *Valor* was made at the end of the thirteenth century, she does not seem to have possessed the tithes that later made her the richest of the Welsh sees; that is, that if the tithes are not really the old Welsh food rents in another form, the greater part of the endowment of St. Asaph has been acquired within the last six hundred years. Such a statement will probably be at once denied by those who are in the habit of ascribing a very high antiquity to Welsh endowments, but if the evidence is carefully examined it leads to this conclusion: (1) Tithes were not known in Wales as a defined legal payment before they existed in England; (2) They were not known in Wales as such a payment until after the time of the codes; (3) The *Valor* of Pope Nicholas, although it states what were the goods of the Bishop of St. Asaph in 1291, and taxes those goods, is silent as to the large amount of tithes belonging to the see. It therefore follows that in all probability such tithes became part of the property of the see at a subsequent date, and if regard is had to the history of the time, this is very likely. No part of Wales was more affected by the Welsh wars of Edward I than the diocese of St. Asaph, and the bishop, Anian, at its close received by way of compensation some of the spoils of the vanquished. In 1289 Edward confirmed to Anian all the rights of St. Asaph,[1] and it is likely the confirmation was accompanied

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, p. 579.

with other marks of favour. One thing is clear, that at the end of the Welsh war the diocese of St. Asaph was thoroughly reorganized, and, as part of the reorganization, it is probable the see of St. Asaph, by one means or another, became possessed of the tithes that afterwards made her so rich. The *Statutes of St. Asaph*, as quoted by Archdeacon Thomas,[1] show that Bishop Llewellyn appropriated tithes to the general funds of the cathedral, and that this process continued.

The return of 1835 also shows what the incomes of the Welsh chapters were, and how the system of appropriation had worked at St. Asaph. The dean, prebendaries, and cursal canons had all separate revenues; the four vicars-choral were the incumbents of the benefice of St. Asaph; the common fund, some £1,400 a year, was divided among the dean and fourteen prebendaries. This is, in effect, the system the Normans introduced: certain revenues appropriated to certain offices, the rest shared in common. At Bangor, the appropriation system was complete; the dean, archdeacons, prebendaries, treasurer, and precentors had each separate revenues; there was no common fund to divide. At St. David's the precentor, chancellor, and treasurer had fixed revenues; the rest of the chapter, six canons, took equal shares in the net revenues, which were mainly derived from fines on the renewal of leases. There was also a fund, probably the survival of the old *clych* (circle), which was divided in certain fixed portions according to seniority. At Llandaff all the chapter had separate revenues. The chapter consisted of fourteen persons, including the bishop, who acted as treasurer; the common fund was divided into fourteen shares, of which the bishop took two. It will thus be seen that in the Welsh chapters the old system of the Celtic

[1] *Diocesan History of St. Asaph*, 53.

endowment could clearly be traced: (1) The tribe of the Saint sharing in the tribal property; (2) certain portions of the tribal property, the common fund being appropriated to certain offices, the residue only divided; (3) and lastly, the right to share in the division being confined, not to members of the tribe of the Saint, but to members of the chapter, which at last became composed only of the officials, and excluded the ordinary members of the body.

To a slight extent the system still remains. St. David's have transferred their estates to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who pay them an annuity of £2,800. Bangor retains some £1,600 a year of tithes, which, after making a payment to the vicars of the parishes from whence it is derived, goes to the maintenance of the fabric and services of the cathedral, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners paying the incomes of the dean and canons. St. Asaph, like Bangor, has an income of about £1,300 a year from tithes, which is applied to the repairs of the fabric of the cathedral, and maintenance of the services; the Ecclesiastical Commissioners paying the incomes of the dean and canons. Llandaff has no tithes; all that is left of its once large estates, is the rent of some fifteen acres of land and nine houses, amounting to under £150 a year, Ecclesiastical Commissioners paying the chapter an annuity of £3,500.[1]

Such seems to be the story of the endowment of the Celtic monasteries, and their history as cathedral establishments. They differ to an important extent from the Latin monasteries. In Wales, none of the Latin monasteries developed into a cathedral, the cathedrals were all the survivors of Celtic monasteries; those that did not become cathedrals, such as Llancarvan,

[1] *Return, Church in Wales and Monmouthshire*, H.C., 240, 1894.

Whitland, and others, disappeared on the arrival of the Latin monks. It must also be remembered that the Latin monasteries aud their endowments have nothing to do with the endowments of the Celtic Church. At the time the Latin monasteries were founded in Wales, the Celtic Church had already obtained the bulk of her endowments, and the history of these endowments after the Norman conquest is rather a history of loss than of gain. The Latin monasteries obtained, in different ways, lands, moneys, and tithes, that had never belonged to any religious body, and when the Reformation came and swept away the Latin monasteries their revenues went to the Crown ; however unjust the conduct of the Crown may have been, it did not rob or affect the Celtic Church of Wales, for the property it confiscated had never belonged to, and had not formed part of the possessions of the Welsh Church, but of her deadly foe, the Latin. It is therefore idle to try to make out a case, either for compensation or commiseration from the conduct of the Crown at the Reformation. The Church in Wales has undergone much, and has suffered much. She has plenty of woes over which to mourn without having recourse to those that never, so far as she was concerned, had any existence.

At the risk of repetition, it will be as well again to state the result of the evidence on the subject, for it is important to make the point quite clear. The evidence establishes these propositions :—

(1.) That there is no proof that there was, and the inference is very strong that there was not, any legal liability to pay tithes in Wales before the Norman conquest.

(2.) That under the Celtic Church (assuming for the moment that tithes were paid, which is very doubtful),

there was never any universal or organized system of payment.

(3.) That the universal legal liability to pay tithes in Wales, was the result of the conquest of Edward I, and of the Latin Church establishing her supremacy there.

(4.) That the tithes the Latin Church demanded and enforced, had never formed part of the endowments of the Welsh clergy.

(5.) That it was the tithes the Latin Church demanded and enforced that were given to the Latin monasteries in Wales.

These propositions are quite independent of the view previously put forward, that the food rents which the Celtic monasteries obtained from the Celtic chiefs were afterwards commuted into fixed payments that subsequently were developed into tithes. That is quite another proposition, and rests on entirely distinct evidence to that already stated as to the effect of the confiscation of the Latin monasteries.

As has been pointed out, food rents and lands formed the two great classes of property both of the lay tribe and the ecclesiastical tribe, and, until the coming of the Latins, the two systems of lay and ecclesiastical ownership were probably identical. When the Latin came and brought with him ideas that tended to get rid of tribal notions, to assert the supremacy of foreign ecclesiastics, and the obligation to pay and support the church, the two systems became intermixed; and this confusion was increased by the Latin applying to the money payments the rules as to tithes, and as to the land, rules highly artificial and utterly opposed to the ideas, feelings, and habits of the Welsh. The Celtic and Latin ideas never became fused; and most, if not all, the persons who consider Welsh questions, regard them from the Latin,

not the Celtic side. Hence, much of the confusion and difficulty that has arisen in dealing with questions relating to land and church matters in Wales.

Although food rents and glebe formed the chief items of Church endowment, they by no means formed the only ones. The Irish laws make a great deal of first-fruits and firstlings, but these seem never to have disturbed the Celts of Wales; and if they existed there, they were not of the importance they were in Ireland. The Welsh theory and practice of the hereditary, or rather the tribal, nature of property in the endowment of the Church, rather operated against this idea of first-fruits and firstlings. One result of this idea was to place the church, in regard to the members of the ecclesiastical tribe, very much in the position of the chieftain as regards the lay tribe. Part of the rules of the lay tribe were that no one could quit the tribe without its leave expressed through the chief. The reason being, that if a tribesman left, he would take his property with him; that property had, by his being a member of the tribe, become part of the common fund of the tribe, and could only be taken away by the consent of the tribe. As in the English law, before 1870, "Nemo potest exuere patriam," so, according to Celtic ideas, no one could put off his tribe, for if he could do so, he would deprive the tribe of the right to his property. The attempt to leave a tribe—desertion as it was called—was dealt with severely; it was only allowed in certain specified cases, some seven in number, and then only on condition of the renunciation by the deserter of his share in the tribal property. So that the tribe was really the gainer by the transaction, the rule being that no act of the tribesman could prejudice the rights of the tribe, or deprive it of its property. If a man had been allowed to desert, or leave the tribe, he would

have deprived the tribe of the right she possessed in him personally. If a tribesman was injured, the tribe was entitled to receive a share, which varied in different cases, of the damages the wrong doer paid for inflicting the injury. Desertion, therefore, had a two-fold effect on the tribe. It would, or might be, an actual injury by withdrawing a part of the common property; it would be a prospective injury in depriving the Church of its contingent right to receive a share of the damages one of its members would recover if he received an injury. It also went further; in some cases, if a tribesman did a wrong, the pecuniary penalty for it would go, not to the injured person, but to the Church, and if the tribesman was allowed to leave the tribe, this also would be lost. The rights of the Church would, therefore, be affected in various ways if a person was allowed to sever his connection with his Church, his ecclesiastical tribe, at his pleasure, and so to deprive the tribe actually and prospectively of its property rights. It was, probably, not so much out of regard to the individual, as in consideration for itself, that the rule was so insisted upon; for if the tribesman ceased to have any rights, and became by crime, or otherwise, incapable of receiving damages for injuries, then there does not seem to have been any difficulty on his leaving the tribe. As long as he was of money value, he could not go; directly he was worthless, he was able to do so. It is probable that the revenue the Church would receive under this head would not be a large one, and against it must be set the liability that the tribe incurred for any wrong or injury done by the tribesman. Yet it was regarded as a valuable right, and it was one of the sources of revenue that the Welsh Church claimed and enforced.

Another source of revenue the Church possessed was

the amount the members of the tribe received for doing the work of the tribe, the fees the members of the Church would get for performing the services of the Church. It is not very clear what fees were payable for the different acts the clergy had to do, but it is, from the codes and laws, quite clear that fees were payable for various ecclesiastical acts, and these fees would form part of the common property of the tribe. Whether the tribesmen could demand the services of the members of the tribe without fee is not very clear—it would rather seem, especially from the Irish laws, that they could; that in return for the offerings and payments, members were entitled to the ministrations of the members of the tribe. But, if it was so, it was strictly confined to tribesmen, and for any ecclesiastical service rendered to any one else there was some fee, or offering, to be paid, which would form part of the revenue of the Church, the common property of the tribe of the Saint. The actual person who performed the rite was only one of the body whose duty, or rather, whose business, it was to do it, and to receive the emoluments for doing it, and he, a tribesman, could not make a profit for himself out of what belonged to the tribe as a whole.

Speaking broadly, the endowments of the Welsh Celtic Church and her sources of revenue would seem to have consisted in the main of the following items:—

(1.) The profits derived from the lands that were her property, and which had from time to time been granted, either to the mother house or to the colony. These might take the form of produce for the support of the house, or services rendered, or rent paid by the tenants of the church. This would be the main source of revenue.

(2.) The payments, originally the *gwestva*, or food rents, which the chiefs of the tribe of the land had been entitled

to receive from the tribesmen who occupied tribal lands, and which the chief of the tribe of the land had granted to the tribe of the Saint. These food rents were, first, the right to be maintained at the cost of the tribesmen for so many nights. Then a fixed amount of food, varying in winter and summer, payable whether the person entitled was entertained or not. Then a fixed money payment in lieu of supplying the articles of food, and this payment, which was originally confined to certain lands was extended by the Latins to apply to all lands, and changed completely in its nature and incidence from a commutation for the liability to supply food, into a liability to pay a certain fixed share of produce, that is, tithes.

(3.) The share of the Church in the tribal property, and in the property of persons who were the members of the tribe of the Saint. Each tribesman, on being admitted into the tribe, received thereby certain tribal privileges, such as a right to a share in the tribal property, and in return for these, the tribe acquired a right to his property. These rights could not be alienated; the tribe could not deprive the tribesman of his rights; the tribesman could not so act as to withdraw himself or his property from the rights of the tribe.

(4.) The share of the Church in any moneys paid for injuries to her tribesmen, or, in some cases, to fines and forfeitures for acts done to her members. If the tribesman was injured, or murdered, if his slaves, his wife, or daughter, were injured or defiled, if his cattle were stolen or killed—in any of these cases, the Church had her share in the sum paid for the injury received by a member of the tribe of the Saint, as the man and all that belonged to him formed part of the common property of the tribe.

(5.) Fees and offerings paid to, or received by, the

Church for acts done or services rendered by any member of the tribe of the Saint, for any ecclesiastical duty or service he was called upon to do, or in which the person paying was allowed to partake.

It will be seen from the above that the chief sources of the revenues of the Welsh Celtic Church were the profits of lands which have come down to us as glebe and rents, and a fixed money payment, which has been, in the course of time, altered from its original idea, and made to represent a totally different class of rights, to which a Divine origin is now ascribed. Whatever may have been the origin of tithe elsewhere, in Wales, the payment had nothing in its inception to do with the Church, or with any right of the Church. It was the tribal liability of the tribesmen to support the chief, a liability which in time was commuted into a fixed payment, and which the Celtic clergy persuaded the Welsh chiefs to grant to them in certain cases. These payments, from certain localities, the Latin clergy extended and made universal, and claimed to be paid as of right, and ascribed to them a Divine origin. But the Welsh tribesmen who originally made them, and, probably, the Welsh chieftains who granted them to the Church, had never heard of tithes or Melchisedec, and, if they had, would have scouted the idea that the payments they made for the *gwestva* had anything to do with either. Until the misplaced ingenuity of the Latin clergy distorted these ancient payments into tithes, no idea ever existed in the minds of the payer or receiver that these payments were made for the support of a priest, or of a church—still less of a parochial clergy.

With the exception that both the food rents and the tithes were fixed payments, all analogy between them ceased. But the fact was taken advantage of by the Latin clergy to apply this idea and this system to a state

of things to which it was wholly inapplicable. Wales has suffered much from having the ideas of the Celtic Church manipulated by Latins and through Latin channels, but the case in which she has suffered most, is, probably, in the change of her old tribal payments into a system for the support of the class who destroyed her tribal system.

CHAPTER IX.

SAINTS.

A MODERN writer who devoted considerable attention to the study of the language of the Celtic peoples, states,[1] "Nous savons avec la dernière certitude que les Romains ont enseigne la religion Chrétienne aux peuples que nous avons appelés Celtiques, mais s'ensuit il que tous les mots employés par les Romains dans l'exposition de leur culte et de leurs dogmes et qui si trouvent dans les deux langues soient des emprunts qui les Celtes aient faits aux Romains?" So far as most ecclesiastical terms go, this question must be answered in the negative, and in no case is the negative more emphatic than in the use of the word "saint." Not only are the Celtic and Latin meanings of the word essentially different, it might almost be said diametrically opposed, but the word has also a distinct meaning in the various Celtic countries. A saint in Wales was not necessarily a saint in Ireland, and the Latin Church would decline to recognize the claims to sanctity of either Welshman or Irishman. There were various causes for these diversities: (1) The fact that the term "saint" had a different meaning at different times and places. In one, the original signification was retained; in another, a more developed meaning was given; in a third, a peculiar or local signification was attached to the term; and (2), when it came to be felt that one of the

[1] Edwardes, *Sur les Langues Celtiques*, p. vii.

glories of a Church consisted in the number of saints it had produced, or could claim to possess, contending Churches were inclined, not only to multiply their own saints, but also to depreciate those of their rivals. In the distinctions drawn between the Latin and Celtic use of the term "saint", the great fundamental difference between the two Churches is again met with, whether the saints were of local or universal importance. Each Church desired to settle its own list of saints. The Latins claimed that the creation of saints was a privilege possessed by its head, and by him alone; that the Pope, and only the Pope, was the person who could say who should or should not be accounted a saint. The Celts, on the other hand, contended that saintship was a matter wholly independent of the Pope or of any other person whatever; that a saint was born, not made, that he was an individual who held a certain position, or was a member of some recognized family. No two ideas as to the basis of saintship could differ more widely.

At first the term "saint" was used to signify a Christian; the term "saint" and the term "Christian" were synonymous. This is certainly the apostolic use of the word, as in the Pauline epistles which are addressed to the saints at some particular place, as "the saints at Ephesus"; here the word obviously means all the Christians there. As Christianity spread, the meaning of the term became more and more restricted; it was confined to some of the leading members of the Church, and gradually narrowed down, until, at last, it was only applied to those exceptionally distinguished Christians whose claims to the name were generally admitted, not only by the Church to which they belonged, but also by other Christian Churches. At last, the head of the Church claimed to possess the power of deciding upon the

right of any individual to sanctity, and recognition by the universal Church. So, gradually, the practice became settled, that it rested with the Pope, and with the Pope alone, to say, as head of the Church on earth, whether an individual was or was not to be accounted a saint. If he so decided, it followed, almost as a matter of course, that there should be some formal recognition of the fact, some ceremony to celebrate the bestowal of the highest title a mortal could obtain. Hence arose canonization, and the whole process which is now employed by the Church of Rome in the declaration that an individual has obtained admission to the roll of saints. Such is the theory of the Latin Church. In it, saintship is a personal dignity conferred on those worthy of it by the ecclesiastical sovereign.

This view of the matter is not of the highest antiquity; it does not date back earlier than the tenth century. Probably St. Ulric, of Augsburg, was one of the first, if not the first person, to undergo the process of canonization.[1] He was enrolled a saint in 993. Mackenzie Walcott, without citing any authority, takes the process back nearly two hundred years earlier, to 804, when he says St. Swibert, of Verda, was formally inserted on the list of saints by Pope Leo III,[2] at the request of Charlemagne. The rules as to canonization that are now in force in the Latin Church did not become part of the law of that Church until the Pontificate of Benedict XIV. It is not necessary here to go into those rules, beyond saying that their effect is, that the title "saint" is an ecclesiastical title of honour conferred on the recipient by the highest ecclesiastical personage upon earth, the sovereign Pontiff, on account of meritorious acts done by the recipient. It

[1] *Proceedings Society Ant. Lond.*, Second Series, xiii, 233.
[2] *Dictionary of Sacred Archæology, sub nom.*

is precisely the same thing as the bestowal of some title, or honour, on some distinguished statesman or soldier; only the title, or honour, is given to the layman during his life, the saintship is never bestowed until after the death of the recipient. In addition to those who are canonized, and those who are universally recognized by common consent as enrolled on the list of saints, there are a number of persons who are popularly styled saints, and who are either now, or were, locally reputed to be such. To this class belong the majority of Celtic saints, especially the Irish saints. When the Bollandists were compiling the *Acta Sanctorum*, they were met by the question whether or not these persons, who were locally reverenced, were to be included in the list of saints, and how the three thousand three hundred saints, who were with Bishop Gerald in Mayo, were to be dealt with. They decided not to include these in their list; they give the reasons for their decision. They say, "the Irish would not have been so liberal in canonizing dead men in troops whenever they seemed to be somewhat better than usual, if they had adhered to the custom of the universal Church throughout the whole world, and given that honour to martyrs alone."[1] If this rule was to be applied, at least ninety per cent. of the Celtic saints would be denied the title. The Bollandists further state the rules entitling a person to be a saint: "They are to be separately enrolled in the number of saints who are entitled to be enrolled, either in obedience to a Pontifical decree, or by public consent of a Christian people, convinced of the sanctity of any one by open and repeated miracles."[2] They go on to point out that this rule has been so far departed from by the Irish, that whole parties of saints were directed to be enrolled together. So they declined to accept the Irish

[1] *Acta SS.* (Bolland.), March 13, "Vita Geraldi," vol. ii, 293. [2] *Ibid.*

saints, as such, "without other and weightier proofs of the public and ecclesiastical *cultus*, wont to be given to saints only by the universal Church". In default of this being forthcoming, they refused to receive the Irish saints as saints, except in the sense that they died pious Christians.

This view of the Bollandists brings out most clearly the great distinction between a Latin and a Celtic saint. The Bollandists base the claim to saintship on two grounds, and upon only two: (1) a Pontifical decree, and (2), public consent of a Christian people, convinced by open and repeated miracles. As a rule the genuine Celtic saint possessed neither of these qualifications. His title was not based on any such grounds. It rested on the fact that he was either the member of a certain family, or of a certain monastery. It was not in any way necessary that he should either have done anything particular, or lived a particular life of holiness, to be entitled to the veneration of his countrymen. It is essential to bear this distinction in mind; it gives an explanation as to several points in connection with Celtic saints that would otherwise have been wholly unintelligible. A Celtic saint was never the person whom a Celt invoked in prayer; on the contrary, prayer was often offered up, not to the saint, but on his behalf. It followed that a Celtic saint was not in a position to take any person, or place, under his protection in the same way as would have been done by a Latin saint. No churches were dedicated to him, as it was useless to dedicate churches to a person who could not, or rather would not, help the faithful, and who was but a man of like passions with themselves. No prayers were offered up to him; they would only be wasted, as he needed them as much as his votaries. No shrine containing his relics was set apart on the great festivals of the Church for the

adoration of the faithful, for he was powerless to help himself, to say nothing of helping others. It is only when the Celtic saint fell into the hands of Latin scribes and editors that he was moulded into the shape that Latin sanctity required, and his biographers found that the ways of Celtic and the ways of Latin saints were by no means identical, and that to put the Celtic saint into a Latin form, the requisites for sanctity had to be invented or supplied.

It is also to be noticed that the Celt seldom speaks of a Celtic saint as a saint. Neither in the *Tripartite Life of Patrick*, nor in the *Senchus Mor*, is Patrick, or any other ecclesiastical person therein mentioned, styled saint. Patrick, Benen, and Cairnech, is the way these personages are spoken of, not St. Patrick, St. Benen, and St. Cairnech. These three great saints are never so designated. It is one of the tests to apply to the age of an ecclesiastical document that is said to be Celtic, whether the persons mentioned in it are or are not called saints. If they are *not*, it may be a genuine early Celtic document; if they are, the probability is enormous either that it is not, or if it is, that it has been edited by Latin scribes.[1] The Latin saints have always their title "saint" prefixed to their names, it being a mark of rank, a title of honour; their biographers considered they were only describing the saint properly in using it, and that its use showed the rank of the individual. But as the Celtic writers did not consider the term to be in any way a mark of distinction or honour they did not consider it necessary to prefix it. In the eyes of the Celts it would be far more important to show the person from whom the saint was descended, than to affix

[1] This is not always so, for in the Bangor *Antiphonary*, a service book of the seventh century, in the text, Patrick, Comgall, and Camlan are not always spoken of as saints; but in the heading and in the margin they are. See H. Bradshaw Society's Publications, x, 14.

to his name a prefix which was common to him and many others. In the old Irish life of Columba, in the *Leabar Breac*, occasionally the prefix saint is used, but usually the saint is spoken of as Columcille, not Saint Columcille. The same thing is to be noticed in the case of the old Welsh saints. In the *Achau y Saint*, except in a very few cases, when all the great Welsh saints, such as David, Teilo, and Deniol are mentioned, the word saint does not appear. The same remark applies to the *Achau y Saint Cymraig*, and where the term is used it is usually in connection with the name of a person who is not a member of a recognized family of saints. In the *Dimetian Code*, at the end of a sentence an appeal is often made to David; it is always in this form, "Dewi of Brevi," or, Dewi of the Blessed Hill, not to St. David. While, as has been shown, the rule is not universal, as the prefix, saint, is sometimes used, yet the genuine Celtic documents are far more likely to be without it than with it. In the *Venedotian Code* the Bishop of Llanelwy is called the Bishop of Asaph, not St. Asaph.[1] But in the *Dimetian* it is Saint Asaph.[2] As the term occurs in the passage where Hwyel is said to have gone to Rome to see the Pope, this use of the word saint is some evidence to show that the passage as to the visit to the Pope is a later interpolation. In the *Venedotian Code*, Beuno, in the *Gwentian*, Curig, are mentioned without the prefix. In the *Cyvreithian Cymru*, which are of a later date than the codes, the distinction is still retained, the saints Michael, John, and Teilo are spoken of in this way, not as St. Michael, St. John, and St. Teilo. In the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, a twelfth century MS. written in the Priory of Carmarthen, the Blessed Bridget is spoken of, as would be expected, not as *Ffraid* but as St. Fraid (*Sanffreid*).[3]

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 217. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 342.
[3] Skene's *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, ii. 44.

In the lives of the saints in the *Liber Landavensis*, a twelfth century work written by Latin monks, the prefix, saint, is usually given to Teilo, Dubricius, Oudoceus, and the other saints mentioned in it. So it will be seen that in the Welsh documents written before the eleventh century, that is, in the time of the freedom of the Celtic Church, the prefix, saint, is usually omitted, while in Latin documents, after the eleventh century, the prefix is usually inserted. This is also the case in Welsh documents written after the eleventh century by Latin monks, such as the *Black Book of Carmarthen*.

Thus, while the fact is not to be implicitly relied upon as a test, it is most useful in showing the estimation that saints were respectively held in by the Latin and Celtic Churches, and as indicating the origin of the particular MS. It is also useful for another purpose. In later MSS., those after the eleventh century, the use or absence of the word gives a clue to the way in which the Latins dealt with certain local saints. They were desirous of getting rid of and suppressing a number of the persons who were locally called saints, and in this way treated both the Celt and the Saxon alike. This was a favourite practice of Archbishop Lanfranc. There is in the *Evesham Chronicle* a remarkable legend of Abbot Walter, the first Norman abbot of that house, who, on becoming abbot, found in the abbey a number of bones of reputed Saxon saints. Being desirous to get rid of them, and acting on the archbishop's advice, he tried if they would burn or not; if they did, they were disposed of, and their owners were not saints; if they did not, then there was a case for further consideration.[1] In Eadmer's *Life of Anselm* a conversation is recorded between Anselm and Lanfranc as to the saintship

[1] *Evesham Chronicle*, Rolls series, p. 323.

of Archbishop Elphege, in which Anselm proved to Lanfranc that Elphege was really a saint.[1] To get rid of unauthorized saints, Anselm, when archbishop, wrote two letters forbidding their worship, and that of those so-called saints who had not received proper episcopal sanction. In the Council of London, in 1102, a canon was passed against these and other superstitious usages.[2] Naturally, under these circumstances, the claims of a number of persons to be called saints were disposed of, and only the most remarkable and celebrated of the local saints, those recognised by the Latin Church, remained on the list.[3]

These provisions, however much they may have affected the Latins, did not directly affect the Celts. It was one of the peculiarities of the Welsh saints that there was never any special *cultus* of them. They were esteemed as saints by the Celts, and that was all. It was impossible for the Latin, strive as he might, to prevent this. The result was that certain of the Celtic saints in time came to be accepted by the Latins. In the *Martiloge*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1526, which may be taken as the final list of saints in this country according to the Sarum use before the Reformation, there are a far larger number of Celtic saints than would be imagined. To take the first three months:[3] In January, Kentigern, Fursey, Fechin, and Gildas; February, Bridget, Werberg, Mele, Ryoke, Finian, Teilo, Bolke, and Ayd; in March, David, Chad, Cedde, Cieran, Senan, Fynan, and Finchell. Of course they are all styled saints in the calendar. It is therefore clear that, in spite of all the attempts to get rid of them, a number of the Celtic saints held their own until the Reformation, and were, to some extent, recognized by the Latins.

[1] Eadmer, in *Vita Anselmi*, vol. i, p. 10, Paris, 1675.
[2] Forbes, *Kalendar of Scotch Saints*, 1872, pp. xlix and l.
[3] Henry Bradshaw Society's Publications, vol. iii, p. xv.

The Irish saints, or rather the term "saint", in Ireland, in early times, seems to have included all the inhabitants of the monastery; numbers, troops, as the Bollandists call them, of saints are represented as being at certain of the monasteries. The three thousand three hundred with Gerald in Mayo have already been mentioned. It was said that with Finnbarr at Lough Iche "as many as the leaves on the trees are the saints that are therein." The list was not confined to Irish. Œngus the Culdee, in his *Litany*, mentions as saints everyone possessing any of the orders, greater or lesser; priests, deacons, exorcists, readers, doorkeepers, monks, pilgrims, and whether Irish or Welsh, Gaul or Roman, all went down as saints in that most miscellaneous catalogue. It is impossible, when reading it, to avoid thinking that when he compiled it the author must have had in his mind the passage in the Apocalypse referring to the "great multitude which no man could number of all peoples, and kindreds, and nations, and tongues". The use of the term, saint, in the Irish Celtic Church may be said to have had its meaning fixed at the time when monasteries were first formed, and the fact of belonging to a religious house was sufficient to give a title to sanctity. To this idea the Irish Celt adhered with all the tenacity of his character, and this accounts for the extraordinary number of the saints of the Irish Celtic Church. This Irish use of the word represents the one extreme, the Latin use, the other, where the term was limited and kept restricted in the narrowest way, to a few distinguished persons. It is not a little remarkable that in Wales neither view, not that of the Celt nor that of the Latin, was adopted. Here the term received another meaning, a sort of intermediate point between the two extremes. In Ireland, the members of the different monasteries became saints. In Wales, the

members, or some of the members, of certain families did so. It often happened that they were members of monasteries as well, and usually in Wales the heads of the monasteries were saints; but in Wales there does not appear to have been any general custom, as there was in Ireland, that all the members were saints, or were so called. There were, therefore, peculiarities belonging to the Welsh saints that are not to be found either in the Irish or in the Latin Church. While the Welsh saints belong to the Celtic group and have nothing in common with the Latin, yet there are very important differences between the saints of Ireland and of Wales. It is another example of the effect of local development of the same idea which is so often met with in the Celtic Church. The meaning of the term saint in Wales did not become stereotyped until a much later date than at which it was in Ireland, and this produced remarkable results. The Welsh saints are all comprised in a period of about four hundred years, from the date of the establishment of Christianity to about A.D. 700. It is not one of the least of the peculiarities of the Welsh Church that while up to about A.D. 700 there are some four or five hundred so-called Welsh saints, after that date only five persons were found who even claimed to be saints. As to this, various explanations have been given. The true one is most probably that the influence of the Latin Church was insensibly making itself felt among the Welsh; one result was that they did not care to do, as had hitherto been done, call a man a saint as of course, either because he was a monk or because he was the member of a particular family. The contemptuous sneer of a Latin ecclesiastic can be imagined on being told of the death of a great Welsh saint. It was probably sarcasm and ridicule, more than anything else, that closed the list of Welsh saints;

all those then in existence were retained, but no new ones were added to the roll. Rees comes to somewhat of the same conclusion. He says,[1] "The primitive Church of Wales continued to maintain its existence. But some four saints about A.D. 700 are its last saints of whom any account has been preserved. In the latter part of the next century the Welsh were forced to adopt the Catholic computation of Easter, and thereby join in communion with the Church of Rome. Since that time only five Welshmen have obtained the honour of sanctity, including Elfod or Ebbodius, the prelate through whose exertions the change alluded to was effected."

While it is incorrect to say that the Welsh Church joined the Romish communion, or even in the ninth century adopted the Latin form of Easter, yet, doubtless, the result of the Latin teaching had its effect in, amongst other things, causing the falling off in the number of Welsh saints; and the fact that there were only five persons worthy of being considered as candidates for canonization, marks out clearly the change that arose, and that for the future some special feature would be looked for in any proposed saint. It was no longer possible that the head of a particular monastery, or the member of a particular family, could, as such, become saints; more was required. Of the four persons mentioned as candidates for saints, after 700, two were bishops, one a hermit, and the other a friar. The extraordinary collapse of the Welsh saints at the beginning of the eighth century is not only a matter of some interest, but also is difficult to account for. Up to about 700, the Welsh saints were an important body in the country. Within the next few years, the saints utterly disappear, and are never revived. This may possibly be due, as to South Wales, to the fact that the

[1] *Essays on Welsh Saints*, p. 305.

monastic colonies from which the saints came were falling into the hands of the bishops, who were becoming, or trying to become, diocesan bishops, and who would do their best to discourage saints who might possibly become their rivals. The effect of the more frequent intercourse between the Welsh and Saxon bishops had caused the Welsh to copy and to imitate the Saxon, and as saints were few and far between in England, so the bishops discouraged them in Wales. This is not a satisfactory explanation of the matter, and the question why the Welsh saints so suddenly and completely disappeared, is one of those in Welsh Church history that still remain to be satisfactorily answered. The usual explanation is that the Latins were making such inroads into Wales that the Welsh were unable to maintain themselves before them, either in church or state; but this theory will not meet the difficulty, simply because it is not true. The Welsh were holding their own, and holding it well, in spite of the vanity of their bishops, and the various attempts they made to copy the Saxons.

At this very time Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury, was writing against the Celtic Church, and speaking strongly against the priests of the Dimetæ, or South West Wales, "dwelling beyond the bay of the Severn, puffed up with conceit of their own purity do exceedingly abhor communion with us".[1] This shows that the advance of the Latin Church was not received with favour, that there was still a considerable resistance to her, and she had not been too successful. Rees says,[2] that Aldhelm is alluding to the Welsh saints, when he says, "What profit can any one receive from good works done out of the Catholic Church, although a man would be never so strict or regular, or retire himself into a desert to practise

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, ii. 271. [2] *Welsh Saints*, 312.

an anchoretical life of contemplation". Whatever was the cause, a great change came over the Celtic Church of Wales at the beginning of the eighth century, and the result of that change was the cessation of saints. It is also to be noted that according to the catalogue of Irish saints, the third order of saints came to an end within fifty years of the time that the Welsh saints ceased. "They (the Irish saints) continued", says the *Catalogue*, "to that great mortality, this is usually said to have been in 666. If this is the date of the termination of the Irish saints, and about 700 the date for the termination of the Welsh, it is fair to assume that there was some common cause that led to the extinction of both bodies. Something is probably due to the fact that the position of the inhabitants of the different monasteries was to some extent changing. The very fact of the saints becoming hermits, and not founders of monasteries, led to the greater importance of the existing monasteries and all connected with them, and especially of the bishops. Each new colony that arose probably was less important than those that had gone before it; there was less to get from the chiefs, and the early zeal of the monks was dying out.

The monastic movement had passed its first stage; the influence of the abbot was declining, and with it also declined that of the saint, who was often also the abbot. The bishop did not necessarily become a saint, as the abbot did. He did not become the head of the tribe of the Saint; his influence was all opposed to the saint as to a possible rival, and he would do all that he well could to prevent the increase of saints. There was also another reason. The influence of the Latin saints began about this time to make itself felt, as appears from the passage in the *Brut y Tywysogion*, that between 710 and 720 a church at Llanfihangel was consecrated, and in the *Brut*

y Saeson, where it is said, under 771, "there was consecrated a church of Michael."[1] This gives a clue to the decline in native saints. A belief in charms and incantations, probably borrowed from Pagan times, always formed a large portion of Celtic belief, especially of that of saints. The hymn of Columba was said to possess the virtue of protecting from evil the person who repeated it on a journey, the *Lorica* of Patrick shielded those who recited it from all dangers, ghostly or temporal. Tradition does not ascribe to any Welsh hymn the same virtues, although there must have been one possessing them. The belief in magic, evil spirits, and the power of the saint to protect Christians from these evils, formed a very strong feature in the faith of the Celtic Church. Michael was the saint of the Latin Church who had overcome the Devil, and so would be regarded by the Celts as the best protector against the Devil and all his works. Doubtless it is to this idea that Michael owes his great popularity in Wales. If any Latin saint was really the saint of Wales, it was Michael; no less than ninety-four churches and chapels, spread over the whole of Wales, are dedicated to him. Rees points out[2] that the proportion the Welsh churches dedicated to St. Michael bear to other churches in Wales is twice as great as those dedicated to St. Michael in England. In the diocese of Lincoln there are one thousand five hundred and twenty churches, sixty of which are dedicated to St. Michael. In St. David's and Bangor, with only seven hundred and twenty churches, sixty-four are dedicated to St. Michael. It is not, therefore, an unfair inference that the Welsh absorbed into their list of saints any saint who, they began to imagine, possessed any real value in the way of possible protection from the powers of witchcraft and sorcery. It was probable this was done,

[1] Rees, *Welsh Saints*, 67. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

not out of any love for Latin Christianity, but to ensure the possession of a new charm against the devil and evil spirits. When once introduced, the idea that it was desirable to get the aid of so mighty a protector as St. Michael rapidly spread. And so, in the same way that the Celts accepted Christianity as a powerful aid against their enemies, the Welsh Celts adopted Michael as a powerful protector against evil spirits. This adoption marks a new departure in Celtic Church history; the holding the idea by Welsh Christians that a saint was a protector and guardian—something more than the mere head of an ecclesiastical tribe. Once this idea took root and spread, the days of the native Welsh saints were numbered, as they could not and did not offer the same advantages to their patrons.

The peculiarities of the Welsh saints are to some extent shown by the title of one of the Welsh catalogues of them. It is called *Bonedd Saint ynys Prydain*, "The gentility of the Saints of the Isle of Britain." At first it seems strange to our ideas that it should be necessary to show that saints were either of good family or of good birth, as in our Latin minds there is not any connection between gentility and sanctity. But birth is one of the special distinguishing marks of the Welsh saints. The most important points in connection with them were their birth, their belongings, and their bringing-up, the fact of their belonging to a particular family—in a word, their gentility; if it was not for that the person would not have been a saint. The same idea is found in connection with Patrick. There is an Irish song which states "St. Patrick was a gentleman and came of decent people." The same idea is found in the *Life of Cadoc*. When he went to Scotland, a sort of mythical personage is said to have met him, who was reported to have been a saint. To test him,

Cadoc asked, "What saint art thou? and of what family art thou descended?"

Out of the list of saints, Rees has tried to construct a most ingenious and most interesting account of the Welsh saints, collecting all the different facts relating to them, and arranging the saints in strict genealogical order. It is impossible with such materials as we possess, to do this more than approximately, but the greatest credit is due to Rees for what he did, for, by reducing unmeaning lists of names into something like order, he first made any systematic study of the Welsh saints practicable. Although many of the details relating to the saints are clearly inaccurate, and it is extremely probable that numbers of the persons mentioned, such as Lucius and the Blessed Bran, never existed, yet the tables bring out clearly the principles on which Welsh sanctity was based, and cast very important side lights, both on the ecclesiastical and political history of the country. It is true there are various matters, some of which are quite unhistoric, others of which are quite unintelligible; yet, in spite of this, enough remains to show what were the rules as to Welsh saints. One special peculiarity, which seems the key to the whole question, deserves careful attention; the saints, as a rule, are not natives, but foreigners, and come from one or other of two great sources—either Picts or Bretons. If any saints are really of pure Welsh blood, their number is very small indeed. In the *Achau Saint Cymreig*, three great families are mentioned, as those from whom the Welsh saints are supposed to have sprung; these families are spoken of as "the three great stocks of the saints of the Island of Britain, the children of Brychan, the children of Cunedda, and the children of Caw of Britain".[1] Assuming that these are

[1] *Cambro-British Saints*, p. 601.

the stocks from which Welsh saints sprang, it will be noted that none of these are Welshmen, all are foreigners. Cunedda was a Pict, he came from the north; it is stated in the *Historia Britonum*,[1] that the Scots who occupied Dyfed Gower and Cetgueli, were driven out by Cunedda and his sons. Some time about the period when the legions were withdrawn from Britain (409), Cunedda left the north, or that part of it called *Manau Guotodin*, and began his march towards Wales. Cardiganshire, Pembrokeshire, and Carmarthenshire formed the territory where Cunedda established himself, and his family ruled those districts. Cunedda was probably a Pict, and it is very doubtful whether the Picts of that date were Christians. Be that as it may, this family of Pictish immigrants and their descendants formed one of the stocks from which Welsh saints sprang. The persons who were conquered or expelled by the family of Cunedda, were probably Irish (Scotti), and this may be the cause of the very intimate connection that existed between Ireland and South Wales. One thing is clear amongst much that is obscure—that a family of northern Celts were the conquerors of South West Wales, and that this family became one of the great, if not the greatest, stock of Welsh saints. The influence of this family was very considerable, both in the civil and ecclesiastical history of Wales. In all early Welsh ecclesiastical history, the Cunedda family played an important part. No less than about fifty saints were, or were said to be, members of this family. It must be remembered that, though Celtic and Goidelic, and probably of the same race as the Welsh Goidels, yet the Cunedda family were both strangers and conquerors in Wales. They naturally introduced their own religious ideas. The fact that they

[1] *Nennius*, c. xiv.

produced such a crop of saints affords very good grounds to answer the question, Who and what Welsh saints were? They were all members of the tribe of the conquerors, and not strictly Welshmen at all. Patriotic Welshmen, feeling this difficulty as to the nationality of Cunedda's family, try to establish that through his mother, Gwael, Cunedda was related to the Welsh, and entitled to the chieftainship of the tribe of Coel Godebog.[1] This is, however, pure conjecture, and, even if true, it is open to the serious objection that the right of succession to tribal rights did not, according to the Welsh rules, generally pass through females. The sons of Cunedda extended his conquests, and a large slice of the country fell under their rule. It is assumed by Rhys that Cunedda was a Christian,[2] and a poem in the *Book of Taliessin* may be cited in support of this view.[3] But beyond the fact that he was the great conqueror of South Wales, little is really known of him; there is plenty of legend; he is said to have been the son of Edern.[4] But nothing is really known beyond the fact that he was the great founder of a line of saints. According to Rees,[5] of Cunedda's eleven children none were saints, but of his grandchildren there were four, and of his great-grandchildren more became saints, or, to put it otherwise, although none of Cunedda's sons were saints, yet there were four out of thirteen of his grandchildren, and nineteen out of twenty-two of his great-grandchildren. So that one of the qualifications required in South Wales for saintship was, being a descendant of Cunedda Weledig, an alien Pict.

The second of the great stock of Welsh saints was

[1] Rees, *Welsh Saints*, 109.
[2] *Celtic Britain*, 245.
[3] Skene, *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, i, 257.
[4] *Ibid.*, i, 258.
[5] *Welsh Saints*, 111.

Brychan, "the mysterious Brychan and his family", as they are called by Mr. Skene.[1] Brychan is said to have been[2] the son of Anllech Goronog, a Gwyddel, by Marchell, a daughter of Tewdrig, King of Garthmadryn, a district forming part of what is now called Breconshire. Rees conjectures that his father was one of the captains of a band of Irish pirates who, at that date, were in the habit of making forays into Wales. Both Cunedda and Brychan were foreigners, and legend has tried to get over this difficulty by connecting them with Wales through their mothers. One version as to Brychan is that his mother, Machell, went or was taken to Ireland, where she married Aulach, son of Cormac, King of Ireland. Their son, Brychan, came over to Wales and established himself in Breconshire. Here he was in the midst of a far more Welsh population than dwelt in the Cunedda districts. The date of his descent into Wales was about 410, nearly the same time as that of Cunedda. Brychan was thus, like Cunedda, a foreigner and a conqueror who established himself in South Wales, and became one of the great stocks of Welsh saints, the great difference between him and Cunedda being the different races they respectively represented. Brychan had three wives, and writers differ as to the number of his children. The lowest number mentioned is twenty-four, the highest forty-nine, of which twenty-four were sons and twenty-five daughters. According to our ideas, at least four of his sons were illegitimate; that, however, made no difference with the Celts with regard to their claims to being saints. In the *Bonedd y Saint* no less than twenty-seven of Brychan's children are said to be saints. In the *Cognacio*, Brychan is stated to have been converted by an Irishman, Brynach, and it is remarkable that all through

[1] Skene, i, 43. [2] Rees, *Welsh Saints*, p. 112.

the Brychan legend there is a constant reference to Ireland and Irish Christianity. It, therefore, seems to follow that this great saint-producing family were foreigners who established themselves in Central Wales, and who spread a Christianity among the Welsh, which, if not pure Irish, was yet something very closely related to it, as opposed to the Pictish Christianity introduced by the Cunedda tribe.

The head of the third stock of saints was Caw. He was also a foreigner. He is said to have come to Wales from the district represented by the modern county of Renfrew. The legend says he was driven out of his home by the Gwyddel fichti, migrated to Wales, and settled in Anglesea, where Maelgwn Gwynedd gave him lands. He had, it is said, twenty-eight sons, nine of whom gave themselves up entirely to war, and the other nineteen are said to have become saints, as did also his four daughters.

These three stocks of Welsh saints were, therefore, all foreigners, two from the North and one from Ireland; and doubtless they and their followers had a considerable influence on the country in which they dwelt by the habits and customs they brought with them. No wonder that differences in religious belief existed among the Welsh tribes, when at the head of each tribe were men who had derived their Christianity from different sources. It is not necessary to go any further to look for variations in the religious rites of the Celts, than to state the fact that the founders of the three stocks of saints all represented a different tribe, and so different religious rites. Practically, these three men and their families held Wales, and from these three men by far the larger number of Welsh saints claimed descent. It is not a little remarkable that during the great saint period of Wales no native saint appears. All of the saints seem to trace, and to be proud of tracing, their descent from one or other of these three foreign

stocks, according to the part of Wales to which they belonged. The total number of Welsh saints is over six hundred, and out of these no less than about one hundred and fifty trace, or claim to trace, their descent from one or other of these three families. So it is said with truth that these three families were the real stocks of descent of Welsh saints; but this is only another way of saying the same thing, that to become a saint in Wales it was necessary to prove your descent from one or other of the three saintly families, none of whom are really Welsh; that is, you must establish yourself to be a foreigner before you could become a real Welsh saint. From this it follows that it was not personal holiness, nor any idea of a pious life, that made a man a Welsh saint. It was birth, and birth alone, without which he could not be a saint; with it, he could be, irrespective of everything else. This fact places the Welsh saints in a very different position from that of the saints of any other country, even from other Celtic saints, and, united with the local and tribal ideas of the particular family, it fully explains the difference and divergencies that existed among the Welsh saints. The foreign element in the Welsh saints does not solely rest on these three stocks. Saints from Ireland continually passed and re-passed into Wales, and, doubtless, they helped to keep alive the pugnacious spirit of the Celt.

Another external element was brought to bear upon Christianity in Wales, which had a considerable effect, both on the Church and on the saints. Certainly twice, and it is probable oftener, a body of missionaries, or saints, came from Brittany to Wales. The great immigration came with Cadvan, from about 500 to 520. Rees conjectures that as many of the saints were men of princely families, they came over here because, having lost their property in the wars of those times, they took to

religion as a profession.[1] All that can safely be said is, that Rees' conjecture is very plausible. The leaders of the first group of Breton immigrants were Cadvan, Cynon, Padarn, Tydecho, and his sister Tegfedd; these are the names best known; Rees gives the names of some thirty-two others. They are said to have been selected from two tribes, the children of Emyr Llydaw, and the children of Ithel Hael, both Armorican princes.

Assuming the figures as to the numbers of the Welsh saints to be anything approaching accuracy, a very large proportion of them were either foreigners, or the descendants of foreigners, or else came from Ireland or Brittany; that is to say, that the Welsh saints were not Welsh at all, but foreigners, and their descendants could not, in accordance with the strict Welsh tribal rules, become members of any Welsh tribe. They formed, therefore, a group apart from the Welsh, and did not belong to Wales. The idea of a saint was introduced into Wales by her conquerors, and was not in any sense a native idea. The fact that the saint was a foreigner, and so could not be a member of a lay tribe, may therefore form the explanation of one very peculiar feature in Welsh saintship. It almost seems to have been considered a qualification for a Welsh saint that he should be of questionable, if not illegitimate, origin. In any account of a Welsh saint, his biographer, instead of glossing over the blot in his birth, brings it forward and glories in it. This is stated by Jones and Freeman in the *History of St. David's*; they say, speaking of Rhyddmarch's *Life of David*, "we are struck at once by several features which it has in common with many of the specimens of British hagiography with which we are acquainted, the saint is the son of a local prince or chieftain, his origin is rather

[1] *Welsh Saints*, 213.

scandalous".[1] They do not attempt to offer any explanation of the point, nor why it is that Welsh chroniclers do their best to make out, as if it was a mark of distinction, that a saint was the result of some intrigue. Several explanations can be offered. A simple one may be, that it was done out of a spirit of opposition to the Latin Church. She, to her great glory, has always insisted so strongly on the necessity for, and the sanctity of, marriage, that the Celts, in their opposition to the Latin ecclesiastics, might be led to boast of and to glorify their custom that the status of legitimate and illegitimate children was practically the same. The objection to this is that the idea of saintly illegitimacy seems to have existed before the date of Augustine's mission to these islands.

Another, and possibly a more correct explanation is drawn from that most curious right of the Irish Celtic Church, the right of firstlings. The Church included in her claim the first-born of a woman, if a son. In later times the right was confined to the first-born of a marriage, but probably in its earlier form the right included all children, whether born from a marriage or not; the constant reference to the birth of a saint being the first-born child (although illegitimate, according to our idea) of a Celtic maiden may probably have some reference to this right.

Another explanation may be that of conquest. A Welsh chieftain carried off a girl, and either in the shape of a thankoffering, as sacrificing the results of his expedition, or as an expiation and atonement for his deeds, he might offer "the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul". Or it is possible that in some way—although now it is difficult to trace it—the questionable birth of the Welsh saints may have had some connection with some religious—probably Pagan—idea.

[1] *Jones and Freeman*, 250.

Another view is, the foreign origin of the saint. He had to be either the child of one of the three great stocks, a member of the families of Cunedda, Brychan, or Caw, or a foreigner, that is, he had to be a person who was not one of the local tribes. The illegitimate offspring of one of the women of the tribe would answer admirably to this description. He would be related to the tribe, but he would not be one of the tribe, yet he could, if necessary, become a tribesman. The tribe would remember that the early saints were not tribesmen, and so would consider that the fact of not being a tribesman was a necessary qualification for saintship. The illegitimate child of one of the women of the tribe would have a right to become a tribesman, but would be a stranger until he was admitted; he would therefore have the great qualification that he was not a member of the tribe. It will be borne in mind that *all* the children of the saintly families were not saints, it was only that saints were all children of these families. It is not asserted that all the children that were saints were illegitimate; the evidence does not quite go that length. But it is asserted that, originally, saints were strangers, and not tribesmen; that this idea lingered on in the tribes until the fact alone remained after the reason for the fact had vanished. As illegitimate children are not members of the tribe, but only in a position to become members, so a saint, who was illegitimate, was in a position to become a member, if circumstances required it, and was also in the position to become a saint, as being outside the tribe. As it is plain that illegitimacy was almost a mark of saintship, in default of a better reason, this may be the explanation.

A further distinction has to be noticed between a saint of one of the three great stocks, and a saint who was an immigrant into the country. A saint descended from one

of the stocks or families, usually became the founder of a family of saints, who, in their turn, also became saints, and appear to have been entitled to do so, as, in accordance with Welsh ideas, saintship, within certain restrictions, was hereditary. It is a common thing to find a person called a saint who is the son of some person who had been a saint. The rights and privileges attached to the position, like all such positions in early society, becoming, or tending to become, hereditary. Thus, descent from an acknowledged saint seems to have been regarded as giving a man a good title to become a saint. This is, however, only a recognition of the fact that the original saint was the founder of a family or tribe of the Saint, and that his children carried on the rights and duties he possessed as members of his family or tribe. The fact of membership of the tribe of the Saint gave them the right to call themselves by the distinctive name of the tribe, which was that of saint. With the Armorican saints this was not the case; they represented no tribe or family—they only represented themselves. They were not members of, or connected with any, recognized Welsh tribe, and had no tribal rights, no claim to be admitted to such rights. If they became, which was rarely the case, founders of a family or tribe, then they would have the saint's privileges to leave to their children, but it was the exception if they settled down; so if they did not, they had nothing to leave, and all their rights died with them. Saintship was not individual property, nor a private title, and could not be left or bestowed as the holder liked, even if, which is doubtful, he could, in those days, bestow or leave any property. Saintship did not descend to a son because he was the son of his father, but because, being the son of his father, he was also a member of his father's tribe. It did not concern the

Welsh to what tribe the Armorican saints belonged; it was quite enough that it was not a recognized Welsh tribe, the saint did not trace his descent from one of the three holy stocks of Wales. This distinction between the position of the foreigners who came and conquered, and the foreigners who came and preached, is of more importance than at first appears, for it indicates plainly the nature and basis of Welsh saintship; the foreign origin of the three great stocks of descent, and the position of the Armorican missionaries, tend to explain some of the peculiar customs and ideas that prevailed in connection with Welsh saints.

As has already been said, two out of the three holy families, those of Cunedda and Brychan, belong to South Wales, and the other, Caw, to North Wales. The importance of the Brychan family lies in its connection with Llandaff, the alleged founder of that house, Dubricius, having been a son or a grandson of Brychan: and the family of Brychan became the tribe of the land which was brought into relation with the tribe of the Saint, through Dubricius. Probably on the Brychan territories all the earliest of the great Welsh monasteries were founded: Llancarvan, Llaniltyd, Caerworgan, Llandaff. It was, therefore, to be expected that the Brychan family would be exalted in Welsh ecclesiastical records, for the family of Brychan under the Celtic rules of the succession to the abbacy might at any time find itself called upon to supply from its members an abbot for any or all of these great Welsh monasteries. Such being its position, it was obviously entitled to call itself one of the holy families of Wales. This fact explains the passage already cited from the *Triads*, which has caused some difficulty to Welsh antiquaries, as to the education of Brychan's children and grandchildren. Brychan is said to have educated them to

qualify them to show the faith of Christ to the nation of the Cymry wherever they were without the faith.[1] That is, he educated them so as to be fit to take charge of the then centres of devotion and learning, the Glamorganshire monasteries and their offshoots. He recognized that at any time he might be called upon to supply this want, and educated his children so as to be able to do it. As Brychan was the chief of the tribe of the land, any of his sons or grandsons, if fit, might be selected to take charge of any of the religious houses; if they were not fit, the right to take such charge passed away from the Brychan family to strangers. To avoid this, Brychan took steps to have his children fitted for their task. It would, perhaps, be going further than the evidence warrants to say that the members of the tribe who were fitted to assume the abbacy as opposed to those who took up other pursuits were designated saints, but it does seem that the term "saint" was used as a distinctive name to show the class out of which the selection might be made. This view, that certain of the children of Brychan formed a class out of which selections might be made, explains two other points; first, how it was that all the children were not saints. They determined to devote themselves to other duties, and so put themselves outside the class from which the selection was made, and as the term "saint" was confined to this class, it did not apply to those who were not included in it; and the second point is only a further extension of the same idea, that females were not usually qualified to form part of the class, and so did not belong to it, and hence, not being members of the class, were not called saints.

Female saints in Wales are the exception, not the rule, and the same is so in other Celtic countries. But of the Welsh female saints by far the largest portion are

[1] *Rees*, 137.

daughters or grand-daughters of Brychan. It will be remembered that the *Triad* draws no difference between the sexes in the account it gives of the bringing up of Brychan's children. This is, it is true, but very weak ground to rely upon, but it does furnish some explanation of what is a very extraordinary fact, that, while as a rule, there are very few female Welsh saints, in the Brychan family they are very numerous, because he had his children, both sons and daughters, so brought up as to fit them to become members of the class whose members were called, and reputed to be, saints. The fact of the small number of the Welsh female saints is very striking; so far no reason has been assigned for it, but it is obvious to anyone who studies the subject that some reason must have existed, and it seems not improbable that the rule which limited the number of men, or rather, confined the class to a particular set of men, also operated to exclude women. This, at least, seems to be the simplest explanation of the fact of the scarcity of female saints. The small number of females that, in accordance with Celtic ideas, were saints, seems to have shocked the feelings of the Latin writers who revised and edited the lives of the Welsh saints, and led them to keep up the credit of the Welsh by endeavouring to pass off as Welsh saints a number of persons who either had no real existence, or, if they existed, had nothing whatever to do with Wales.

Thus at Llwyngyrion, in Cardiganshire, St. Ursula and her virgins are said to have landed, and so to have become Welsh saints. St. Winifred, whose existence is almost as great an exercise of faith as her miracles, and whose connection with Wales is still more so, has also been brought in to supplement the list of females. One female Celtic saint, however, deserves notice; the Blessed Bridget, or Bride, as she was called in Wales. She is by far the

most celebrated of the female Celtic saints, whether judged by the early accounts of her management of the Kildare monastery or by the later accounts of Celtic writers. These last seem to have been invented for a deliberate purpose. When Celtic Christianity encountered the Latin Church, the Celt soon found himself at a terrible disadvantage in having no person that could in any way be put forward to occupy the position the Blessed Virgin held in the Latin Church. The Celt felt, and felt truly, that if the battle was to be carried on under anything like equal terms this defect must be remedied. Therefore the Celt elaborated Bridget. Her story, it is true, by no means represents the loftiest idea of female holiness, and it is quite possible that in the narrative some traces of Paganism may be found; yet, for want of a better, she has been the favourite female saint of the Celts, the representation of the highest Celtic ideal of female sanctity, an ideal that may seem to us to be by no means one of the loftiest. Several points in her legend deserve notice, as they bring out the same ideas as to the nature of saintship that have been pointed out in reference to the male saints. Her mother was a slave to Dubhthach, who was descended from a common ancestor with Niall of the nine hostages, a chief of the Hy Niall, the same tribe as that to which Columba belonged. Like other Celtic saints, Bridget was illegitimate. Her mother was, before her birth, sold to a Druid, and here it is that probably most of the Pagan ideas to be met with in her life arise. She was subsequently freed by her master, and is then said to have been consecrated a nun by having the form of ordaining a bishop read over her. The great exploit of her life was the founding the celebrated monastery of Kildare. This part of her biography is noteworthy, as showing, what is seen more clearly in the Welsh saints, that she exercised tribal rights

quite irrespective of the fact of her illegitimacy; that no position in life, however low, not even that of a slave, will deprive a person who is entitled to them of tribal rights. In the *Senchus Mor*, in the tract on the law of social connexion, there is a curious passage,[1] probably an interpolation, relating to Bridget. It states the cases where the full *eric* fine is to be paid in cases of the connexion between a man and a woman by force or secrecy; it gives as an instance the case of a young nun who has not renounced her veil, and the gloss adds, "For a young nun who has not renounced (her veil or) her nunship, one half of the *honor* price to the *tanist* successor of Bridget." This clearly means to the elected successor of Bridget, the *tanist*, that is, the eldest and fittest of the class, being elected out of the class. The *eric* fine and the *honor* price went to the head of the tribe, and, if the passage is not an interpolation, it would show that the *tanist* successor of Bridget, that is, the head of the Kildare house, had some claim to be regarded as the chief of a kind of female ecclesiastical tribe, and so entitled to these fines. The matter is very obscure, but the passage points to a further extension of the tribal idea that as the male monasteries were supposed to belong to the ecclesiastical tribe of the founders of the original house, so, by analogy, there was a female ecclesiastical tribe, to which all monasteries that were either houses of females, or had a female side, belonged; that the head of the Kildare house (the *tanist* successor of Bridget) was the head of the ecclesiastical tribe, that for any injury a nun sustained, the compensation went to the Kildare house as such head. It is not the least curious part of the matter that Kildare was a double monastery, having both male and female inmates; but what were Bridget's rights as to the males is not stated.

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, ii, 407.

There is hardly any matter which has been the subject of wilder speculation than the fire which was said to be kept perpetually burning in Bridget's monastery at Kildare; but, if the fact mentioned above, that Bridget was the head of an ecclesiastical tribe, and was so regarded by the Irish, is correct, the explanation of the fire may be very simple, and one that has but little to do with religion. In that remarkable tract, the *Crith Gabhlach*,[1] which treats of the organization of the old Irish tribes, it is stated that social grades are derived from the similitude of ecclesiastical orders; every order in the Church is to have a corresponding one in the people. In specifying the duties of one class of chiefs, the Mbruighther, one of the privileges he possessed was to have "ever-living fire" without borrowing. This implies that the right to have fire always burning was a right, indicating a chief of a certain social rank. In the same way, in the ecclesiastical tribe, the right to have an ever-burning fire might be a mark of social rank and distinction, even if connected with religious worship. This is the case not only in the Irish, but also in the Welsh laws. No one could take fire without leave. No one might give fire without first knowing what was to be done with it.[2] The right to have fire was the right of the chief, and he supplied it to his tribesmen. It might be in this way that Bridget, as the chief of a tribe, possessed the right to have fire at Kildare, even although there was another reason, such as analogy from the vestal worship.

In the second great family of saints, that of Cunedda, whose territory comprised Cardiganshire, Pembrokeshire, and West Carmarthenshire, the stock of saints is stated in the *Achau y Saint* as consisting of some fifteen persons. One peculiarity about them is that, unlike those of Bry-

[1] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, iv, 311. [2] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 261.

chan's family, it is the exception to find the sons saints, but all or most of the grandsons and their children were. The most important and most numerous branch was that of Ceredig, which numbered amongst its members David, Dogmael, Tyssul, Teilo, and Gwynllyw. Among them they gave the names to the majority of the churches in their territory, and furnish a good instance of how the family of the chief made itself locally felt both in civil and ecclesiastical matters. Ceredig conquered Cardiganshire; the Cardiganshire churches bear the names of the sons of Ceredig. There are great differences between them and the Brychan family of saints, and the difference is too marked to be due to accident, or anything but design. In the Brychan family it is the children who are saints, the grandchildren hardly appearing in the list. In the Cunedda family the bulk of the children are warriors, not saints, but the grandchildren and their descendants are mainly saints, and not warriors. Whatever may be the true inference to be drawn from these facts—whether that the territory of Brychan was converted before the territory of Cunedda, is not clear. But the fact is at least established that in the early homes of Celtic Christianity in Glamorganshire, from the Brychan influence, Christianity was stronger than elsewhere. Cardiganshire was converted later. Cunedda being a Northern Pict, such Christianity as he possessed was derived from another source than that of Brychan; so the Christianity of the Cunedda district would vary considerably from that of Brychan. If Ceredig was a Christian, which Patrick's letter to him makes a matter of some doubt, there may be grounds for the conjecture that the efforts that he and other Celts made to conquer the country were to some extent due to the inducements the ecclesiastics held out to him to put down Paganism, and the clerical aid given him in his work may

account for the fact of so many of his grandsons becoming saints. There is hardly a female saint in the Ceredig family, or in any of the branches of it. A more striking contrast between the two families of Brychan and Cunedda could not well be imagined. Both were foreigners who came and settled, or more probably conquered, parts of South Wales. It was by conquest that they established both themselves and their Christianity, and it is an instance of how much more tribal ideas prevailed than Christian, to find that the South Wales saints did not try to trace their descent from the saint or person who converted the country to Christianity, but gloried in their Pagan ancestors, and traced back their descent to them. Being Christians and saints was the accident of their position, and was not considered as anything to boast of; their real glory was that they were the descendants of such mighty conquerors as Cunedda and Brychan.

In considering these two families there is another point to be noticed. It has been said that it is most likely, having regard to the sources from whence they derived their Christianity, that the ideas of the two families would be different. This divergence, and the rivalry between the two, was probably the beginning of the long contest between the two sees of Llandaff and St. David's. Roughly, the modern diocese of Llandaff represents the territory of Brychan, although a good deal of it extended into what is now St. David's. The territory of Cunedda would also very roughly represent the diocese of St. David's. Brychan and his followers represented the Irish branch of the Celtic Church; Cunedda and his people, the Scottish. What were the differences then existing between the two, it is now most difficult to say, but it will probably not be wrong to state that differences did exist between these two branches, and these differences, with

the rivalry between the two families, would lead the way for the jealousy and quarrels that so long existed between the two bodies, and afterwards between the two dioceses.

The third of the stock of Welsh saints, that of Caw, opens out other matters connected with the Welsh Celtic Church. Caw, like Cunedda, was a Northerner driven out of his home by the Irish, the Gwyddel. He retired into Wales and settled in Anglesea. In one of the accounts he is himself called a saint. One of his sons, Aneurin, was present at the battle of Cattraeth, whence he escaped and was afterwards taken prisoner, rescued by Ceneu, went to South Wales and joined the monastery of Llancarvan, from whence Welsh writers make him emerge as the historian Gildas. From Llancarvan he went with Cadoc to the Steep and Flat Holmes islands, in the Severn Sea, and ultimately to Glastonbury, where he wrote his history. Caw is said to have had five daughters and eighteen sons who were saints, and nine others who devoted themselves to war, and were not included in the list of saints. Rees seems to be of opinion[1] that under the list of the children of Caw his grandchildren, and perhaps other relations, are included, who were his followers and disciples and who composed his clan, the number of his reputed children being too large to be credible.

The consideration of these three saint-producing stocks brings out some very interesting facts with regard to the origin of Welsh saints. As has been already said, each of the three, Cunedda, Brychan, and Caw, were not Welshmen; each is said to have been driven out of his own country, and sought Wales as a refuge from his enemies; each, either by conquest or by cession, acquired considerable territory in Wales, where they established some kind of authority; each was the father of a number of

[1] *Welsh Saints*, 232.

descendants, some of whom were saints, others warriors, some the heads of the tribe of the land, some the heads of the tribe of the Saint. The children and descendants of the conquerors acted on the principle, the spoils for the victors, and some took the temporal, others the ecclesiastical spoils; one thing is quite clear, that in one way or the other, nothing was allowed to escape from their grasp; everything was to be for the advantage of the family or tribe. Nothing could show more clearly the tribal nature of the Welsh saints than the fact here brought out so strongly, to keep the spoils of war in the hands of the tribe a number of warriors and a number of saints were required; the tribe was equal to the emergency, and evolved the warriors and saints, who kept their grasp on the conquered country, and did not permit anything to pass from their hands into those of the conquered Welsh. Probably the religious ideas and observances of each of these tribes differed, but they had one thing in common—under no circumstances would they permit their hold on the conquered country, or their power over the conquered people, to be relaxed. With the aid of the saint and the warrior they retained their position. The history of these three families deserves most careful study, it will yield important results in early Welsh history, and bring out a good deal that has been neglected or overlooked—how three foreigners, by the aid of the sword and of religion became the source for the Venedotian, Gwentian, and Dimetian saints. If, at first sight, it appears to be peculiar that the family of a powerful chief should divide into two branches—the lay and the ecclesiastical, the warrior and the saint—it must be borne in mind that their religion was not the idea of universal brotherhood, or of peace and goodwill, but how the fortunes of the tribe could best be advanced; the warriors assumed the

temporal arm, the saints the spiritual, and their whole object was to promote the prosperity of the tribe and tribal interests. This seems to have been the regularly recognized and accepted state of things. Those who took to religion founded a monastic establishment for the tribe, where they, their wives and children, resided. This appears to have been the state of things in Northumberland, among the Celts there. And there is no reason to suppose that it was not also the case among the Celts elsewhere. It would be what we should expect to find, and is doubtless, with some local differences, a true description of what was found in Wales and Ireland. In his *Epistle* to Egbert, the Archbishop of York, Bede, referring to the Celtic religious communities, begs him to put them down, for he says they amounted to a scandal. It is, however, obvious that it was far easier to talk about putting down such a state of things than to do it. As long as the right of succession to the headship of the monastery was of an hereditary nature, the right to become a saint was something to which, after a life of crime, the Celtic robber would look forward as a means of quieting all his fears, and silencing all his scruples; he was not likely to give it up to please either bishop or priest. The chief could end his days in a combination of luxury and piety, and the system probably gave him what he valued most, the right to die in the odour of sanctity. To this must be ascribed the great desire of every Celtic saint, and also every Celtic chief, on leaving the monastery where he was brought up, to found one of his own. There were, in those days, but few ways of making oneself famous, the two main ones being by victories with the sword, or by victories as a saint, but the best and the most certain mode was the combination of the two—a life of plunder, a death as a saint.

The view put forward that the saint was of necessity

a member of the chieftain's family, and that only members of that family could be saints, explains to some extent how it is that so great importance was attached in the early Welsh histories to the genealogies and descents of these families. The amount of genealogical matter in them is out of all proportion to what we should consider as necessary or important. When it is borne in mind that their genealogies were the title deeds of the chief, or of the saint, to fill the one or other of those two offices; that they disclosed who were the persons out of whom the successors to king or saint were to be chosen, if it was necessary to make a choice, the importance that was paid to these genealogies is at once apparent. To us they may appear but a tangled record of names, but that is because we do not recognize that upon them turned the vital question of those days—the possible chance a man had to be a saint or a sovereign; but for this the class from which the saint was to be selected would have had almost indefinite expansion; but for this the saintship could not be kept select or the power retained in the hands of the original saint's descendants. Probably a good deal of these genealogies are fictitious, and it is as well to receive any particular genealogy with great distrust, as the historians of St. David's say they do that of David himself.[1] But yet, in all probability, these genealogies represent the tribal tradition, and are mediæval attempts to put that tradition into form and shape. "They are an attempt on the part of the chroniclers to systematize and bring into harmony a mass of pre-existing legends, the subjects of which are thus brought into mutual relation. Hence, probably, arose the *triad* of the holy families, and particularly the extremely symmetrical progeny of Brychan Brycheinog, many of the individuals

[1] *Jones and Freeman*, 252.

composing which may have had very possibly a real though an independent existence."[1] The importance of knowing whether a particular genealogy is actually right or wrong is but small. Their real importance is as showing the principles and the ideas on which the Celts acted, how they applied the tribal principles and ideas to religion, how close was the intermixture between the monasteries of Wales and the saints of Wales, and between the saints of Wales and the chiefs of Wales, and the fact that saintship and chieftainship were almost convertible terms.

It must be admitted that this view deprives the Welsh saints of much of the legendary charm that invariably attaches to a saint and his surroundings. It is difficult to get up any sentiment about a man half a robber and half a monk, who, because he was the member of a class, and could give the required security, was admitted to rule over some obscure religious house, and therefore became a saint. For such a person, whoever his ancestors may have been, it would be impossible to feel much enthusiasm, still more so when in all probability—

> "His ancient but ignoble blood,
> Had crept through scoundrels ever since the flood."

No wonder that when these men were contrasted with the glorious ideals of the Latin Church, the Celtic saint was despised. Not for the Celt could it in any sense be said, "Wherever church was founded, or soil consecrated for the long resting-place of those who had died in the faith, wherever the sweet bells of convent or of monastery were heard in the evening air, charming the unquiet world to rest, and to remembrance of God, there dwelt the memory of some apostle who had laid the first stone, there was the sepulchre of some martyr, whose

[1] *Jones and Freeman*, 252 *n.*

relics reposed beneath the altar, of some confessor who had suffered there for his Master's sake, of some holy ascetic, who, in silent, self-chosen austerity, had woven a ladder there of prayer and penance, on which the angels of God were believed to have ascended and descended."[1] There was nothing of this about the Celtic saint. He lived and died not as an example to humanity of the height to which sinful nature could be made to attain; his loftiest idea of excellence was to do his best for his tribe in the office of saint; to add to its riches, to extend its territories. But when the Latin biographers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries came to write the lives of the Celtic saints, they did not grasp the distinction between the two ideas of sanctity, the respective positions the two sets of saints occupied. In their opinion there were certain things a saint, whether Latin or Celtic, ought to do as a matter of course, and if these were wanting they supplied them. All the details they had of the Welsh saints were statements, not as to who was the saint's father, for that was usually a matter of doubt, but statements as to his genealogy which had nothing saintly about them. The biographer felt that he had to make these dry bones live, and it is a great proof of his devotion to his subject that he was able to work up out of his materials such detailed accounts as have come down to us as the lives of the Welsh saints.

As long as we regard them as what they really are, the ideas of Latin monks of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as to what a Celtic saint ought to have been, these lives are of great value, and are most instructive; but, regarding them, as is too often done, as truthful narratives of the actual events that took place in the lives of the Celtic saints, they are worse than worthless. The

[1] Froude's *Short Studies*, First Series, i, 518.

attempt to use them as the basis of detailed Welsh ecclesiastical history is only to add to the difficulties which already exist in connection with that most difficult subject. Perhaps they are best described in the words of a recent writer on the Welsh Church as "possessing many of the characteristics of the religious novel".[1]

One point in connection with them should be noticed. The Latin Church only regarded as saints those who had received recognition at Rome, or those whose sanctity was assured by open and notorious miracles. Of the Welsh saints only one, St. David, was ever regularly canonized, and his canonization was due to political rather than religious reasons. To prove the saintship of the other saints, miracles were a necessity, and so the demand created the supply. We should not blame the writers, who only did their best to ascribe to their heroes the characteristics their heroes were required to possess. The biographers forgot it was no part of the duty of a Welsh saint to work miracles. He was not required to do so, at all events in historic times. To ascribe to him miracle-working powers was to forget the position he held, and it is a fairly safe rule in dealing with the lives of Welsh saints to reject, as a later addition, all accounts of the miracles they are said to have wrought. These have been inserted and ascribed to them in forgetfulness of their real position, duties, and objects in life, and must therefore be rejected as being the ideas of another age. It is not without regret that this has to be done; it leaves us so little information about the lives of the Welsh saints; it makes them, to adapt the term on one of their own rude monuments, "*Congeries nominum*," a mass of names and very little more, out of which all the sentiment and most of the romance has departed.

[1] *Newell*, 42.

It is, however, noteworthy that in the legendary lives of the Welsh saints certain of the ideas already mentioned as to what is known of the real lives, always occur. The legendary lives of some twenty-three saints have come to us, none of which can even claim to be historic; they were all written at least from four to five centuries after the saint's death, and are "simply non-historical legends of persons who for the most part really existed, although there is but faint evidence even of the existence of some of them".[1] In addition, we have the legendary lives of five more so-called Welsh saints, who, almost certainly, never existed at all, except in the minds of their biographers. These are such saints as St. Winifred, St. Gudwald, St. Lewinna, St. Indractus, St. Iwyi, and St. Elgar. But all these saints, whether real personages or not, had this one point in common with the genuine saints—they were foreigners, not Welshmen, for the most part Irish or Bretons, but still foreigners. It is not a little remarkable that both fact and fiction unite in the point that Wales did not produce native saints. This forms the strongest evidence of the genuineness of the accounts we get of the Celtic saints, as it is just one of those points that would not be invented. If the Latins had held rule in Wales, and her saints had been moulded on the Latin type, it is incredible but that we should have had the touching narrative of some native Welshman who endured all and braved all for the faith of his country, who attained to the crown of martyrdom, to the glory of canonization. But there is absolutely nothing of the kind.

It is to this that the prevalence of saints in South Wales over North Wales must be ascribed. At first sight it seems difficult to account for it, as there is nothing to show that South Wales was in any respect more pious

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 161 *n.*

than North Wales; but if it is borne in mind that piety had nothing to do with saints, the reason begins to appear. It was South Wales that was conquered by foreign invaders. It was in South Wales the foreigner settled and made his permanent home; so the sons of the foreigner were more likely to be found there, the foreign influence was greater there, the active work of the foreign tribe more extensive there than in North Wales. The conquerors were more in evidence in South Wales; more was done, both in war and in religion; more leaders were required, so there were more warriors and more saints.

The lists of Welsh saints bring out the fact that the Welsh saint was not necessarily an ecclesiastic. Here and there in the lists a note follows a name, such as bishop, abbot, and sometimes saint, but it seems to be inserted more to distinguish the person from some other of the same name than for any other purpose. Had all the saints been in orders there would have been no necessity for these distinctions, and the distinction goes to show that the original lists of the saints took no notice of orders. A man was a saint or not, quite independent of whether he was in orders. This was either a mere immaterial detail, or else the mention of it shows that it was the exception for a person in orders to be a saint, and therefore it was necessary to make a note of it when it occurred. Mediæval writers thought it right that there should be some sort of connection between the bishop and the saint; so, if a person became, or was reputed to have become, distinguished as either, he was also at once reputed to be the other. A distinguished bishop in mediæval Latin ideas was, of course, a saint; a distinguished saint was at least a bishop.

It is a fact that deserves notice in connection with

what has been said, that Welsh saints are not Welshmen, but foreigners, that in spite of the large number of Welsh saints, there is no real national saint of Wales. It will be said that David is the national saint of Wales, but to urge this is only to display ignorance of the elements of Welsh hagiology. David is a South Wales saint, and has nothing to do with North Wales. Not a single church or chapel built before the beginning of this nineteenth century is dedicated to him in the whole of North Wales, and in no way is he connected with that part of the Principality. The reason is that Welsh saints were all local, that is, tribal, that David was the saint of the Cunedda tribe, and that the territories of the Cunedda tribe did not extend to North Wales. He is not even the saint for the whole of South Wales. Teilo is far more the saint of South-east Wales than David. It is true that having been the only Welsh saint canonized, the Latins regard David as the patron saint of Wales, as he is the only one they recognize; yet, in spite of these advantages, the Welsh never, until after the time of Latin ascendancy, adopted or regarded David as the saint of Wales. It is a survival of the fact that there were three stocks of Welsh saints, and that each tribe adhered to its own. Had any one of the Welsh tribes had supreme power in Wales, their saint would have become the National saint. This was never the case, and so none of the saints was admitted as superior to the other. It is only a nation that has a patron saint; Wales was never more than a collection of tribes, each with its own saint.

No document has ever come down to us that contains any evidence that before David's canonization he was regarded as anything but the Dimetian saint, but documents have come down to us showing he was so regarded.

In the *Dimetian Code*, and in that alone, there occur occasionally appeals to David as the recognized saint of Dimetia. "Dewi of Brefi," "May Dewi of Brefi help us," "May Dewi of Brefi assist," "Dewi of Brefi of the Blessed Hill," "May Dewi of Brefi assist us."[1] No other saint is appealed to in the *Dimetian Code*. No appeal to David is made in either the *Gwentian* or *Venedotian Codes*. The matter goes a step farther. These appeals to David are mainly to be found in a fifteenth century MS., which the editors of the *Welsh Laws* say,[2] from the references to Dewi, and also from references to Gwenog, was written in Cardiganshire. Had Dewi been the national saint of Wales, it would be expected that appeals to him would be found throughout the Principality, but that is not the case. He was the national saint of Dimetia; so appeals to him are numerous in the *Dimetian Code*. There are none in the other codes, so it follows he was not the person to whom the tribesmen subject to those codes would appeal; that is, he was not their national saint.

The cult of David as something more than a local saint was due to his canonization, and it seems to have arisen between the thirteenth century and the Reformation—the period of the rule of the Latin Church. There is a poem in the *Red Book of Hergest* that shows that David was at its date regarded as more than a local saint. "Actively will the sons of Cymry call upon Dewi who loveth peace and mercy."[3]

"Escut gymry plant galwant agdewi
Agar tagneued trugared tr6ydi."

The poem in which this passage occurs is a very late one, and is said to be of the time of Edward II. In the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, a MS. ascribed to the

[1] *Ancient Laws of Wales*, i, 426, 584, 594. [2] *Ibid.*, p. xxxi.
[3] Skene's *Ancient Books of Wales*, i, 495; ii, 298.

middle of the twelfth century, is a passage which may or may not be read as giving more than local honour to David:

"Listen, O little pig—it was necessary to pray
For fear of the five sovereigns from Normandie
And the fifth going over the salt sea
To conquer Iwerdon with its pleasant towns.
* * * *
And they certainly will come from it
And do honor on the grave of Dewi."[1]
(Ac awnant enrydet ar bet Dewi.)

Various passages might be cited from South Wales poets to show their praise of David, but that until the Latin Church took him up and forced him into the position of the patron saint of Wales he was not so regarded, or indeed looked upon as anything more than a merely local personage. Contrast this with Patrick. Modern history has tried to locate him at Armagh, but Celtic history connects him with Ireland. He was not the saint of a tribe, or a district, but of the Irish people. His reputation extends to every part of Ireland, so that it may be said "Ubi Hibernia ibi Patricius."

Nothing of the kind can be said of David, nor of any other of the Welsh saints, such as Teilo, Dubricius, Padarn. All of these were tribal saints; and in some instances the fact is even more obvious than in the case of David. The exceptions to the rule are saints who were partly Welsh and partly Breton. Some of these, such as Cadoc, have a great reputation both in Brittany and in Wales, but even these are merely the saints of two special districts in Brittany and Wales; they are not in any sense the national saints either of Wales or Brittany. Cadoc comes nearest the idea of a national saint, but it is rather difficult to say what his nationality was, and, so far as

[1] Skene's *Ancient Books of Wales*, i, 483; ii, 22.

saintship goes, it was more Breton than Welsh. This is what would be expected as the result, if the saint was the head of the ecclesiastical tribe; whether he was celebrated or not depended on the man, not on his being a saint. Saintship came by birth; celebrity depended on how the man acted as a saint.

One result of being a saint by succession, or otherwise than from personal merit, was to render it unnecessary for the Celtic saint to do anything from time to time to maintain his saintly reputation. As head of the religious tribe he might lead its tribesmen to battle, and some of the tribes could muster a very respectable array of fighting-men. Such would probably be the case both in the monasteries of Menevia and Llandaff, both of which could, when required, appeal to the secular arm with effect. In Ireland, conflicts between ecclesiastical tribes were not unknown, and although the record of a fight between two Welsh ecclesiastical tribes does not seem to have come down to us, yet it by no means follows it is because such conflicts did not occur. The saint's position as head of the ecclesiastical tribe enabled him to dispense with performing mighty works; he could rest and be thankful. Hence it is that genuine Celtic documents record so few miracles; there was no necessity for them. The saint based his claim to sanctity not on what he could do, but on the fact of what he was, the head of the tribe of the Saint. But with the Latin it was different. His whole claim to sanctity rested, not on who he was, but on what he could do, and it was therefore necessary that miracles should always be going on at his tomb so as to keep him well in evidence. He had nothing to fall back upon if his reputation as a saint declined, and it was a daily struggle with those who had the charge of his relics to get acts done, if not to enhance, at least to keep up the saint's reputation. The

Celtic saint required no exertion on his part; the Latin saint was lost if exertions were not made on his part. As now, when the biography of the holder of some office is written, it is customary to represent him as possessing all sorts of virtues to show the reason why the office was given him, although, probably, his virtues were the last reason why he got it. So the biographers of the Celtic saints, when they found they had to write an account of the saint, felt compelled to pile up virtues and to allege the possession of power to work miracles. Miracles and saints were almost synonymous terms, so the historian of the Celtic saint treated him as he did the Latin, and multiplied miracles. It was not wilful lying or deliberate deception; it was a desire to be just and to give the saint what, in the biographer's opinion, was his due.

The same idea that the Welsh saint was an official, the head of the ecclesiastical tribe, is probably the explanation of the reason why so few of the Welsh saints attained the crown of martyrdom. A man who attains a position by birth, rather than by belief, usually regards controversial matters from a broader standpoint than the man who has made the assertion of certain fixed ideas the object of his life. A Welsh saint would probably not require from his tribesmen more than an outward conformity, and probably much Paganism was practised under the eyes of the saint without any interference from him. There was no necessity for it; outwardly all his tribe and its dependents were good Christians—why should he look further? If a more powerful chieftain, or some Danish pirate, or Saxon Pagan, conquered the Welsh saint, all he had to do was to enlarge the borders of his Christianity by the admission of a little more Paganism. As Gibbon said of the Old World philosophers, to them all religions were equally true. So to the Celtic saint, a little further dilution of his Christianity by

Paganism did not matter; at best, his Christianity was but a mixture of those two elements, and he would hardly care to suffer martyrdom when it was merely a question of an alteration in the proportions of the mixture; as long as he lived he would remain chief of the tribe of the Saint, and so, a saint, why should he be martyred over so small a matter? The deaths of the few Welsh saints who were murdered bears out this view. They were usually persons captured by Danes or Saxons and put to death at once, without the option of changing their views and saving their lives. Cadoc, for instance, was chased into a church and killed there. Strictly, he was not a martyr, as he did not by his death bear witness to the truth of his opinions. His death was not caused by his opinions; he would probably have been killed if his faith had been identical with that of his murderers. Those who died a violent death were not, strictly speaking, martyrs. The number who thus died was very small, while in the true sense it is doubtful if any portion of those who were killed were really martyrs. It is not a subject of reproach to the Celtic Church that she has produced no martyrs; she had not the opportunity of doing so if she had wished. Neither the Celtic missionary nor the Celtic saint spent his time in arguing against idolatry, superstition, and Paganism; their mode of conversion was not by preaching but by practice. Their lives in the monasteries did not usually evoke hostility. Had they begun to preach and denounce all who differed from them as accursed, in the manner of the Latins, doubtless the Celtic Church would not have wanted her proportion of martyrs. As it was, she followed a more excellent way, and the taunt of Giraldus Cambrensis against the Irish Church was not deserved. Speaking of the Irish bishops, he says:[1] "Sed non fuit in ipsis qui

[1] *Topographia Hiberniæ*, iii. 28.

tamquam tubam exaltaret vocem: non fuit, qui ex adverso ascenderet et murum pro domo Israel se opponeret; non fuit qui usque ad exilium nedum usque ad sanguinem pro ecclesia Christi dimicaret quam ipse sibi suo precioso sanguine aquisivit. Unde et omnes Sancti terræ istius confessores sunt et nullus Martyr, quod in alio regno Christiano difficile erit invenire. Mirum itaque quod ubi gens crudelissima et sanguinis sitibunda, fides ab antiquo fundata et semper tepidissima pro Christi ecclesia corona martyrii nulla. Non igitur inventus est in partibus istis qui ecclesiæ surgentis fundamenta sanguinis effusione cementaret, non fuit qui faceret hoc bonum, non fuit usque ad unum." Giraldus must have wilfully shut his eyes, thus verifying the proverb, "None so blind as those that wont see." What he says of Ireland applies equally to Wales. Exactly a similar state of things existed in both countries. In neither did the saints cement the foundations of the rising Church with their blood, for it was not necessary for them to do so. It was no reproach either to them or their system that the Celtic Church did not encourage its members to works of needless and useless sacrifice. The Celtic saints had no opportunity of showing how they would have faced martyrdom.

One of the most eloquent of the modern historians of the Latin Church of the West tries to account for the lack of Celtic martyrs by contending that their place was taken by the monks, who, by their austerities and penances, underwent a daily martyrdom.[1] But this excuse will hardly entitle the Celtic monks to a place in the ranks of the noble army of martyrs, for the marvels and triumphs of asceticism were not confined to the Celts, but were more than equally shared by the Latin Church. All that can be said is, that the Celtic Church produced no martyrs

[1] Montalembert, *Moines d'Occident*, vol. iii, 122.

because the circumstances in which she found herself placed did not warrant their production.

Another peculiarity of the Welsh saints was that they never seemed to have been moved by that missionary spirit which made the Irish saints instrumental in the conversion of Western Europe. "It is remarkable," say Haddan and Stubbs,[1] "that while the Scots were the missionaries *par excellence* of nearly all Europe north of the Alps, and in particular of all Saxon England north of the Thames, not one Cambrian Welsh or Cornish missionary to any non-Celtic nation is mentioned anywhere." This may possibly be accounted for from the fact that the missionary spirit spent itself in bringing the foreign teachers to Wales, and did not extend to sending them from that country abroad. It was the distinction between a native and a conquering race of saints which caused the different views as to missionary efforts, natives having the desire to go and do something, conquerors having the desire to stay and consolidate their conquests. The influx into Wales of saints from Ireland and Brittany also shows that, unlike Ireland, Wales had no more saints than were necessary to supply her own needs. If she had been overflowing with saints, as Ireland was, there would have been no need to import strangers. Home requirements, and a desire to retain what they had acquired, are most likely the causes why the Welsh saints did not undertake foreign missions. But it must not be supposed that Wales suffered from any lack of saints. A singular poem, known as the "Elegy of a Thousand Sons" (*Marwnat y Vil Veib*), in the *Book of Taliessin*, deals with the number of Welsh saints. The poem is said by Mr. Skene[2] not to be of earlier date than 914. It discusses the number of saints in different

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, p. 154 *n.*

[2] Skene's *Four Ancient Books*, i, 546; ii, 109.

countries. Armorica, the fens of Toronia, who had broken the advanced *Caer* of Rome, and Poli and Alexandria and Garanwys and Indra—"Tres partes divicia Asicia, Affrica, Europa." The passage in the poem points to the conflict between the Latin and the Celtic Churches. What its precise meaning may be is difficult to say, but it appears to imply that Brittany resisted with success an attempt at conversion by Romish missionaries; that is a triumph for the Celtic Church. The poem goes on to speak of the number of saints in the Isle of Prydein and Iwerdon, "a gentle portion." After mentioning the number of the saints in the East it goes on to say, "Seven scores, seven scores, seven hundred of saints and seven thousand and seven ten scores." It is not quite clear if this reference is to the total number of saints, or merely to the number of Celtic saints; it rather seems to be to the total number. Be that as it may, the poem gives us the divisions so often met with in Ireland, the mystical number, seven, a division which was much favoured by the Celtic Church. We find not only a group of saints consisting of seven members, but also groups of sevens—seven bishops, seven churches. Nor does it rest here; each of the groups of seven is itself divided into so many groups of seven. The poem is probably largely written for rhetorical effect, but it obviously contains some reference to the reason why the Celts are so attached to the mystical number, seven.

The subject of the Celtic saints and their peculiarities is one involving so much connected with the organization and nature of the Celtic tribes and the Celtic Church, that it is impossible here to follow it into detail. A book, a most interesting book, might be written, showing from the peculiar practices of their saints what Celtic Christianity really was, and the vast gulf that lay between it and the Latin Church. Here, only a few of the leading points have

been incidentally mentioned, and the great point of the Welsh saints being foreigners, of their being tribal leaders, or chiefs. To follow out all the consequences of this fact would involve a close inquiry into Celtic tribal organization. It will be seen that any such state of things is quite inconsistent with the Latin views of saintship. It is not to be wondered at that out of all the Welsh saints, only one was canonized, and he owes this far more to the fact that at the time of his canonization, Calixtus II was most desirous of conciliating the two South Wales bishops, and retaining them on his side in the great struggle then going on, than to his own merits. From the time of David's canonization he really ceased to be a Welsh and became a Latin saint, and must thence be regarded in that light. All the other saints of the Celtic Church retain their peculiarities, although they are often difficult to be traced under the numerous disguises in which their Latin biographers have dressed them up. Yet, in spite of all, the original Celt is to be found in the Latin lives of the saints. He appears to be a man only slightly different from the other chiefs, who laid no claim to working miracles or to great personal holiness, but who professed to be what he was—the head of the ecclesiastical tribe. He was not the subject of invocation or adoration, and would have felt much astonished to be told that he was. He was not a great missionary; there was no necessity or need for him to be so; he was merely the head of the settlement of the ecclesiastical tribe, that, and nothing more; but that made him a saint. Just as Charles II and George IV were Defenders of the Faith because they were kings of England, so the chief of the Celtic ecclesiastical tribe was a saint because he was such chief. This is often obscured by modern writers, and oftener forgotten. We all so firmly believe that a saint

must have something saintly about him, that we cannot realize the contrary. This belief has led to much inaccuracy in dealing with Celtic saints. Perhaps the best instance is in the case of Columba, one of whose modern Latin biographers [1] has tried every art of that pen, which he says he used "as a weapon in the cause of the Church", to depict an Irish monk, whose real claim to sanctity rested on the fact that he was a chief of the northern branch of the great Irish tribe of Hy Niall, as a Latin saint. After reading the glowing romance so eloquently told, it is impossible not to venerate the Irish exile, who, "from his island rock, swooped down to preach, convert, enlighten, reconcile, reprimand princes and peoples, men and women, laics and clerics".[2] Here we seem to have found our ideal of a saint, and our enthusiasm leads us to think that if Columba was the type of the Celtic saint, what a splendid corps they form in the saintly army. But when we pass from the ideal to the real, and see the Celtic saint as he was in fact, and not surrounded by the halo of enthusiasm, the reaction is so great that there is considerable danger lest we are led, in spite of fact, and in spite of history, to try if it is not possible for us to make out that the Celtic saint does, in fact, to some extent, reach the level of his idealized portrait.

[1] Montalembert, *Moines d'Occident*, iii, 282.

[2] "Jusque sur le roc insulaire d'ou il s'elancait pour precher, convertir, éclairer, reconcilier, réprimander les princes, les peuples, les hommes et les femmes, les laiques et les clergé."

CHAPTER X.

THE CONFLICT.

So much has been said in the preceding pages as to the conflict between the Celtic and Latin Churches, and as the story of this conflict is usually, in modern histories, either kept out of sight or minimized as much as possible, in order to fully realize the struggle the Celtic Church underwent, and the contest she so long maintained, it is necessary to try to tell the story of that struggle and conflict. Both churches fought hard for the mastery, and it is not the least of the claims of the Celtic Church to our attention that she maintained the fight as long as she did against the foreigners, supported as they were by all the power and resources of the great Church of Rome. It is something for the Celtic Church to be able to say that, in spite of every attempt that was made to subdue her, in spite of the power of England, of the efforts of the religious orders, of the attacks, both open and secret, of the Latin Church, she was yet able to hold her own. She often appeared to be overwhelmed by her rival; still she kept up the contest; the Celtic Church of Scotland succumbed to the Latin attack; the Celtic Church of Ireland submitted to Rome; but the Celtic Church of Wales, though often defeated, never surrendered, and when at last the Church of Rome was swept away by the Reformation, the unconquerable Welsh Church still remained to carry on her struggle against a fresh adver-

sary and a new religious system. No other Church has fought so obstinately against ecclesiastical tyranny; no other Church has had so little credit for its struggle for religious freedom.

It may well be that the Celtic Church of Wales, as a religious system, was not in our opinion worth fighting for; that, however, should only increase the credit of the Welsh for the courage and determination with which they fought. The story of the struggle divides itself into several distinct periods. The first comprises the time between the establishment of Christianity in Wales, and the arrival of Augustine, or rather, the conference between Augustine and the Welsh ecclesiastics, a period of from three hundred or four hundred years, according to the date at which the conversion of Wales to Christianity is fixed. This period terminated about 602. During this time the Celtic Church perfected the system attempted to be described in these pages. It was the time of her independence and complete freedom from any external control. Wales was then completely cut off from the rest of Europe by the Pagan Saxons; only with Ireland, Scotland, and Brittany, did she keep up any intercourse. It was the period of the origin and development of her peculiar religious system, which owed its peculiarities to local circumstances. The second period dates from the conference with Augustine, the refusal of the Celts to submit to him and the rule of Rome. It includes the time when intercourse with England had brought about certain changes in the Celtic Church, such as the adoption of the Roman Easter, and the fact that the Celtic bishops sought consecration from Latin prelates. This covers a period of five hundred years, from 602 to about 1100, the time when the Norman conquerors asserted their right, not only to consecrate, but also to nominate the bishops

in Wales. This period is usually spoken of as the period of the schism between the Celtic and Latin Churches. The term, however, is wholly misapplied. There was no schism. The Celtic Church, even if it had its origin from Roman missionaries, a fact which has yet to be proved, was an independent Church, free from all foreign control. It never admitted the authority of the Pope; it never claimed to be any part of the Latin Church. Schism implies unity; as there never was unity, there was no schism. To speak of the schism and its termination, as is often done, is simply to mis-represent the state of the case. Unless the fact of differing from the church of Rome is the same thing as schism, there was no schism between the Celtic and Latin Churches. There was plenty of "false doctrine and heresy", but no schism. The third period extends from the time the English kings began to nominate Welsh bishops until the date of the Edwardian settlement of Wales, when Edward claimed to be possessed of Wales by right of conquest, and to set up there the system of government that for temporal matters is contained in the Statute of Wales, 12 Edward I, and for ecclesiastical matters, in the orders for the Church issued by Archbishop Peckham—a period lasting about one hundred and eighty years, from 1100 to 1284. The fourth period is the time during which the Latin Church had the rule in Wales, from the time of Edward's conquest until the incorporation of Wales and England by the legislation of Henry VIII (26 Henry VIII, c. 1), and the downfall of the Latin Church, a period of some two hundred and fifty years, from 1284 to 1534. The fifth, and last, period is the rule of the Anglican Church, some three hundred and sixty years, from 1534 to the present day. During each of these periods, the Celtic Church has maintained the struggle with her opponents; often

defeated, often crushed, she has again and again rallied from her defeat and carried on the fight. He would be a bold man who would venture to say that the ecclesiastical struggle in Wales is yet over, or what its termination will be.

The first period, that of the absolute independence of the Celtic Church from all foreign authority, has been already dealt with. It may be summarized by describing it as a system of local tribal Christianity, each tribe having its own ecclesiastical system, and neither admitting nor acknowledging any external authority. The tribe was self-contained, both in temporal and religious matters, and in neither did it recognize or require any interference from outside. There was no supreme ecclesiastical authority over the country, no territorial division of the country for ecclesiastical purposes. With such a state of things, the Welsh, on meeting the Latin Church, were at a disadvantage. There was no one who could "consent in their name and on their behalf" to any proposed change. Any ecclesiastic might possibly bind his own ecclesiastical tribe, but he could not do more.

The second period marks the first conflict between the Latin and the Celtic Churches. It is unfortunate that we do not possess any Celtic account of either of the two conferences between Augustine and the Welsh. The story as told by Bede,[1] is evidently written from the Latin point of view, yet it is easy to see in it the difficulties of the situation; there was no one who was in a position to speak with authority on behalf of the Welsh. Each tribe had to decide for itself; the decision of any one tribe would not bind the others. It was this feeling that probably led to the adjournment of the first conference, there being no one present able to speak for the North

[1] Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, ii, 2.

Wales tribes. This want of some recognized head of the Celtic Church evidently led the mediæval writers who composed the alleged answer of the Welsh to Augustine to assert that there was a recognized head of the Welsh Church—the Bishop of Caerleon-upon-Usk. If this was so, it is very singular that he was not present at either of the conferences and able to speak on behalf of the Church over which he ruled. The names of the seven so-called bishops who were said to be present are certainly the invention of a later date[1] (Hereford, Llandaff, Llanbadarn Vawr, Bangor, St. Asaph, Weeg, and Morganwg). Out of the seven, the existence of three of the sees is very doubtful (Llandabarn, Weeg, and Morganwg). Of the rest, Hereford was not then in existence, it not being created until after Mercia was converted to Christianity. The absence of St. David's is most singular. There is no satisfactory evidence to carry the matter beyond Bede's account. The Welsh would not submit. It is hard to see how they could submit, for they were asked, according to Bede, to surrender their independence, and admit an authority which alleged it was superior to them. They would hardly so far dishonour their tribes and their superstitions as to agree to this. It is true Bede puts forward the three points that Augustine demanded from the Welsh—the time of holding Easter, the adoption of the Roman form of Baptism, and joint missionary work to the Saxon Pagans, as the grounds of severance, but to have accepted these points implied complete surrender, with an admission of Augustine's authority. We should have thought worse of the Welsh than the most fervid Englishman does, if they had accepted a system opposed to all their ideas, and agreed to join in forcing it on the Saxons by a method wholly at variance

[1] *Iolo MSS.*, 547: *Haddan and Stubbs*, iii, 41.

with their notions of right. They could make but one answer to the Latin demands—the answer they did. The vindictive spirit of the Latin comes out strongly in Bede when he relates[1] the story of the slaughter of the Celtic monks of Bangor Iscoed, by that most savage of the Pagan Saxons, Ethelfrith the Wild, as an instance of the fulfilment of Augustine's curse, and of the wrath of God on the Celts for refusing to submit to the Latins. Whatever else may be uncertain or doubtful, there can be no doubt of the intense hatred between the two Churches, if Bede may be taken as a fair specimen of the way in which the Latin monks regarded the Celts.

The failure of the Conference was the declaration of war between the two Churches. At first the Latins could do but little, as the heathen Saxons occupied their entire attention. The Welsh could wait, and it was not until Theodore of Tarsus became Archbishop of Canterbury that any really effective steps were taken. Theodore's divisions of the country into dioceses—and if he also, as is said, divided it into parishes as well—materially strengthened the position of the Latin Church. Wales had now on her borders bishops of a very different type to her own; not the officials of a monastery, but powerful local lords, who could not only give orders, but were strong enough to make them obeyed by force, if required. The existence of the bishops, territorial lords, with power over a defined area, power over all people within it, must have appealed strongly to the Welsh, who, like all half-savage peoples, were inclined to worship force. The Welsh monasteries and their officials must have felt that they were confronted with powerful neighbours against whom neither Celtic abbot nor bishop could successfully compete. Theodore also took a step that had a very great effect on the Welsh;

[1] Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, ii, 2.

he refused to admit not merely the validity of the Celtic orders, but also the validity of the powers of their bishops, contending that they were not properly consecrated, and that all acts done by them as bishops, whether in conferring orders, consecrating bishops, or consecrating churches, were invalid and void. This step of Theodore's must have produced a great effect on the Welsh Church. Chad, a Welsh bishop, was advanced to the see of Lichfield, but before he took possession of it he submitted to be reconsecrated. It would have been difficult to find anything that would have had a greater effect on a superstitious people, like the Welsh. They valued their bishops far more on account of the supernatural powers they purported to possess than for any other reason. If their bishops had not the right or authority to use this power, then, so far as the Welsh were concerned, they were persons of no importance. They may not have paid much attention to the thunders of Theodore, but when one of their own bishops, a man like Chad, deliberately admitted that, as a Welsh bishop, he had no valid claim to supernatural powers, that he was, in fact, an impostor as regarded his power to invoke the aid of Heaven, the Welsh bishops found the ground giving way under them. Added to this, some of them, especially the bishops of Llandaff, began a process by which their monastery largely profited, and which, if the Welsh bishops did not possess Divine authority and supernatural power, would be no longer availing. The *Liber Landavensis* records a series of acts by the Llandaff bishops, which, on a Welsh prince committing any heinous offence, such as murder, an event by no means uncommon, the Llandaff monks devised a mode of punishment which combined the advantage of putting the offender to penance and of enriching the Llandaff house. On hearing of the crime being committed, the bishop assembled a synod, in which the case of the

offending prince or chief was considered. If guilty, a certain penance was imposed on him, but if he made a grant of lands or territory to the Llandaff monastery he obtained absolution, and his penance was remitted. As the prince was only induced to submit to the jurisdiction of the synod by reason of the spiritual terrors with which he was threatened, on his finding that these terrors were a delusion—that the Celtic bishops had no power, and could not deal with the supernatural, could not invoke the Divine wrath upon him—the prince naturally paid but little attention to the synods or their judgments.

Theodore's policy therefore affected the pecuniary interest of Llandaff, and the monastery had to find some means to meet the difficulty. This they did by seeking consecration from the English Archbishop, who was naturally willing to give it, as consecration, in his view, meant submission to his authority. When once a Welsh bishop received it from him, the Latin was able to say that he possessed authority over certain Welsh bishops, as they had submitted to him in order to be consecrated by him; thereby at once admitting their inferiority and the Archbishop of Canterbury's superiority. The Llandaff bishops seem to have preferred the power of plundering Welsh princes to the independence of their Church. In the period before the Norman Conquest several of them are alleged to have been consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and then their favourite employment, holding synods, punishing Welsh princes, and obtaining grants of land, went on without any interruption. A bishop of St. David's, Lumbert, is also said to have been consecrated at Canterbury, and made his profession of obedience.[1] In itself, the fact of being consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury may not have been a matter of great import-

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 208.

ance, but its effect on the Celtic Church was most disastrous, for it enabled the Latin archbishop to assert his right and his authority over the South Wales dioceses, and gave him just the hold he required to interfere in Welsh affairs. In order to be qualified, and able to frighten the Welsh princes into making a grant, the South Wales bishops gave up to Rome the independence of the Celtic Church. Theodore's policy was amply justified by the event, as he secured for his successors a means of conquering the Celtic Church.

The Latins having failed to produce any result from an attack on the Welsh Church as a whole, took advantage of its peculiar tribal constitution and the independence of each tribe to try an attack in detail. In this they had better success, and the result well brings out the peculiar composition of the Celtic Church. It will be remembered that one of the points on which Augustine insisted the Welsh should conform to the Latin, was the date for the celebration of Easter, the Celtic Church adhering to the old method, the Latin having adopted the reform of Pope Hilary. In some way, how, does not clearly appear, the Latins were successful about 755 in persuading Elbod, the Bishop of Bangor, to accept their mode of fixing Easter. The entry in the *Gwentian Brut* states "Easter was changed in Gwynedd by the advice of Elbod, Bishop of Bangor, but the other bishops did not concur therein, on which account the Saxons invaded the Cymry in South Wales."[1] This device of the Latins to secure the adoption of their date of Easter by one of the Welsh tribes, thus breaking up and disorganizing the opposition, is a good example of the way in which the Latins acted to the Welsh. As an attempt to destroy the Welsh opposition to the Latins, it was in a way successful, probably more

[1] See *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 3rd Series vol. x, p. 6.

indirectly than directly, for it gave the Latins a most powerful weapon against the Welsh, by enabling them to say "Your brothers in such a monastery have admitted Roman doctrines and ritual; why do not you do the same?" Although the adoption of the Latin Easter by Elbod did not end the Easter controversy, traces of which lasted for some time longer, yet the question lost all its importance, and never again became one of the great grounds of difference between the two Churches. It may be said that during this period all the chief outward signs of difference between the two Churches disappeared, and that the Celtic Church adopted most, if not all, of the distinctive Latin ceremonies. The differences between the two Churches were now far more matters of principle than matters of detail. But we have no evidence whether on points such as the mode of administering baptism, the mode of consecrating bishops, the mode of consecrating churches, the use of a peculiar ritual at mass and at ordinations, and, above all, on the great question of tonsure, the Latin forms were adopted or the Celtic forms still survived. After the end of the second period none of these questions in themselves were regarded as of first-rate importance. It may be said that at the time of the Norman conquest the Latin Church had practically secured conformity in external matters by the Celts.

The third period marks a different phase of the dispute. So far the Latins had not tried to interfere with the government of the Celtic Church, they had remained satisfied with obtaining from the Welsh bishops promises of obedience in return for the gift of full episcopal power. They do not seem to have ever done more, or to have interfered in any way with the bishops after consecration. In the last half of the eleventh century two steps were taken that had a very important bearing on Welsh Church

history. William I asserted that, about 1079, on his invasion of Wales, and his visit to the shrine of St. David, the Welsh submitted to him and agreed to pay him homage, and own him as their superior lord. This right of conquest, he alleged, gave him the right of interference in Welsh Church matters. The other was that along the English border of Wales William established, or rather continued, a series of great lordships, the holders of which had almost independent jurisdiction in their lordships and over such lands as they could add to them by conquest from the Welsh. In addition to these lords marchers, several Norman adventurers were allowed to make private expeditions into Wales, conquer what they could from the Welsh, and hold what they conquered from the English king, as his vassals. This process, although it cannot be said to have destroyed Welsh independence, interfered very seriously with it. The temporal power the Normans thus gained in various parts of Wales was utilized as a means for introducing spiritual power.

Another step was taken in establishing the rule of the Latin Church in Wales which had been long in preparation. For some years, along the line of the Severn, a series of rich and powerful religious houses had been gradually springing up. At the time of the conquest these houses formed a line of forts from which an attack could be made, and made with success, on the hated Celt. In each of these monasteries Norman abbots were placed, and care was taken that their temporal forces should be at the disposal of the crown. Each of these houses was Benedictine. Each of these houses was ready, with all the zeal and energy it possessed, to push forward the cause of the Latin Church. The Benedictine order was utilized in another way. The Norman adventurers who were allowed to conquer for themselves estates in Wales with their

swords, were possessed with the then prevalent idea that the foundation of a religious house was the highest form of human virtue. Several of them had either founded, or helped to endow, some large Benedictine abbeys in Normandy, and they did not fail to enrich their Norman houses either by grants of land they took from the Welsh, or by founding on the conquered land a cell to the Norman abbey. The Benedictine foundations in Wales were, as a rule, not independent foundations, but cells to some other houses, either in Normandy or England. Between the date of the Norman conquest and the year 1100, six[1] Benedictine houses were founded in South Wales by Norman adventurers; all were cells to other houses—four to abbeys in Normandy, one to the Conqueror's new abbey of Battle, and the other to the great house of Gloucester. These six houses were each a centre of Latin missionary effort, zealous to promote the objects of the Latin Church, and to establish the supremacy of the Latin ecclesiastical system. It must also be remembered that these religious houses were not placed by themselves, or in positions where they would be exposed to the attacks of the Welsh. They were either, like the houses at Pembroke and Monmouth, inside the castle walls, or, if without them, under the shadow of the castle, and so safe from the Welsh. Wherever a castle was built, there also rose a religious house, so that the Norman conquerors and the Latin ecclesiastics went hand in hand. Nor were these houses scattered at random about the country; they were designedly placed in particular districts, so as to form real positions in the defence of the country. Out of the six houses already mentioned, four—Chepstow, Monmouth, Ewias Harold, and Abergavenny—were in the diocese of

[1] Chepstow, Monmouth, Brecon, Pembroke, Ewias Harold, and Abergavenny.

Llandaff, and it was over the diocese of Llandaff that the jurisdiction of the Latin Church was first asserted.

No Benedictine house sprang up in the Welsh parts of Wales. This order followed the Norman adventurer like his shadow, and wherever there was a Norman castle there was also a Benedictine abbey. A modern French writer, in describing the recent attempts of France to found colonies, said, with some truth, that a French colony always consists of three things, "a barrack, a café, and a theatre". It may be said that a Norman settlement in Wales consisted of three things—a castle, a monastery, and a church. By the aid of William's conquest of Wales, and by the support rendered by the Norman settlers and the Benedictine monks, the Latin Church found herself strong enough to make a move against the Celts. Anselm was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. Saint as he was reputed to be, he had very strong ideas of the supremacy of the Latin Church. He was not content merely with exacting from the Welsh bishops, on their consecration, an oath of obedience; he thought that as he had the power, it was well to use it, and compel obedience. Herewald, Bishop of Llandaff (1056–1104), was the person on whom he first tried his hand. For some cause that does not appear, Anselm placed the bishop of Llandaff under an interdict. Writing to the Abbot of Seez, in Normandy, Anselm says, if a priest purports to be ordained by Herewald, he is not to be so regarded, as he had interdicted Herewald, so the orders given by him ought not to be deemed valid. It is only in Anselm's own letter[1] that the matter is mentioned, but it shows that the Latin primate was not content to allow the Celtic bishop to take an oath of obedience and submission and do nothing more, but was bent on

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 299.

asserting the authority of the see of Canterbury, that is, the authority of the Latin Church over the Celtic Bishop of Llandaff.

Anselm was not satisfied with placing the Bishop of Llandaff under an interdict: he also dealt with the Bishop of St. David's, Wilfred, taking advantage of the quarrels of the Welsh about the succession to the see on the death of Bishop Sulien, in 1083. At first, Wilfred succeeded and was consecrated by the Celtic form, and not at Canterbury. The St. David's monks, however, acting on strict Celtic rules, turned him out in favour of a fitter member of the ecclesiastical tribe, Rhyddmarch. Anselm appears not to have recognized Wilfred as bishop while he had only a Celtic consecration, thus carrying out the policy introduced by Theodore; but when, on Rhyddmarch's death, Wilfred again tried to enforce his right, and required Anselm's help to regain the see, he had probably been made to submit to Anselm, as the archbishop wrote to the Earl of Shrewsbury, Arnulf Montgomery, Ralph Mortimer, Philip de Braose, and Bernard Newmarch, all Norman adventurers, who had conquered estates for themselves in Wales, directing them to restore or replace Wilfred in the see of St. David's.[1] This they did, and Wilfred, by their aid, held the see until his death, in 1115, when the Norman conquerors went still further and appointed a Norman to it. The importance of this affair of Wilfred is, that it shows how the Latin Church established her supremacy in Wales. Up to this time any interference had been confined to Llandaff; now, taking advantage of the increased temporal power gained by the conquests of William's barons, and of the disputes among the Welsh monks, the archbishop was strong enough to advance a further step

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 300.

by supporting one of the disputants, and appealing to the Normans to carry out his orders against the Welsh.

It was the greed of the Llandaff monks to be able to spoil the Welsh princes that enabled the Latins to gain a hold on Llandaff. It was the quarrels and disputes of the St. David's monks that enabled the Latins to gain a hold on St. David's. It was not wilful treachery, but it was, in both cases, owing to the fault of the Welsh, that the Latin was able to obtain a footing for interference in the Celtic Church. Jones and Freeman cite the case of Wilfred as an instance of the exercise of metropolitan jurisdiction by the Archbishop of Canterbury over the see of St. David's, before the time of Bernard.[1] This, it, however, was not. On Sulien's death there was a dispute as to who was to succeed, probably a dispute as to which of the two candidates was the fitter, according to Celtic ideas. Wilfred at first was successful, but afterwards was displaced by his rival, Rhyddmarch. Wilfred then sought the aid of the Archbishop of Canterbury to replace him. The archbishop gave him a letter to the Norman adventurers to help him against the Welsh. But so little attention did they pay to it that Arnulf de Montgomery arrested Wilfred, and kept him a prisoner for forty days. Had Anselm really had anything like metropolitan power over St. David's, he would have ordered the restoration of Wilfred by virtue of that power, and either excommunicated or interdicted Rhyddmarch. The fact that Anselm does not use, or pretend to use, any authority in the matter, but only requests these Norman adventurers to do their best for Wilfred, is very strong proof that he felt that he possessed no real power over St. David's, and that this was only an attempt, to be used as a precedent, if successful, when occasion required.

[1] *Jones and Freeman*, 270.

In the suspension of the Bishop of Llandaff, and in the restoration of the Bishop of St. David's, the Latin had made two bold strokes for asserting his authority over South Wales. So far as we know, neither of them called forth any opposition or protest from the Welsh. The way was therefore open for a further exercise of spiritual power. On Herewald's death the see of Llandaff remained vacant for four years and a half. Then it was filled up by a Norman nominee, Urban, who is said to have been a Welshman and Archdeacon of Llandaff,[1] but there is nothing to show that his appointment to Llandaff was otherwise than an act of the king's, or of Anselm's. It was probably thought as well not to proceed too rapidly at first, and that the appointment of a Welshman to a Welsh see, even if made by the crown, would raise no difficulty. It was a bold step, but its wisdom was justified by its success. For the first time in the history of the Celtic Church, an alien authority appointed a Celtic bishop. Care was taken, on the consecration of Urban, that there should be no question as to his authority being derived exclusively from Latin sources. Previous bishops had been consecrated by Celts, and re-consecrated by Latins; so the Celt could at least say that any such bishops derived their power from Celtic sources. This could not be said in Urban's case; the consecrating bishops are expressly named in the *Book of Llandaff*, and they are all *English* bishops—York, London, Rochester, Chichester, Lincoln, Chester, Norwich, Durham, and Bath. In the Profession rolls of Canterbury,[2] Urban, who is styled, not Bishop of Llandaff, but of Glamorgan, promises canonical obedience to Anselm and his successors. So far it would seem that the Latin had won a great victory in appointing the bishop to a Welsh see, having such bishop consecrated

[1] *Liber Landavensis*, 268. [2] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 303.

exclusively by Latin prelates, in accordance with the Latin ordinal, and the new bishop submitting himself to, and professing canonical obedience to Canterbury; but there is another side to the picture. It seems that Urban was married and had a son. Possibly the Latin Church considered that to ordain such a man bishop was a small sacrifice to make to Celtic prejudice in order to secure so great an advantage to the Latin Church as the right to appoint Welsh bishops. Meanwhile the Latin Church was working in another direction. A Breton, Herveus, had been appointed Bishop of Bangor; how he was appointed to that see does not appear, whether by the Welsh or the Normans, nor whether or not he was consecrated by the Celtic or Latin form, but it appears that he was consecrated by the Archbishop of York during the vacancy of the see of Canterbury on Lanfranc's death. No profession of obedience, however, appears on the Canterbury rolls. He therefore seems to have been in much the same position as several of the previous Welsh Bishops, his consecration was valid according to Latin ideas, but that was all. An alien never gets on well in Wales in an ecclesiastical office, and Herveus was no exception to the rule. He is said to have governed too strictly, at all events he was driven out of, or deserted, the see, some say he was starved, others that he wanted a richer Bishopric. Whatever was the cause, Herveus induced the Pope to write to Anselm urging his translation elsewhere; a proposal was made to send him to Lisieux, but to this Anselm refused his consent.[1] The Pope,

[1] Among Anselm's letters there is one from him to Henry I, in reply to a proposal of Henry's that Herveus should be made a bishop in the diocese of Lisieux, saying this cannot be done, not on account of any scruple that Herveus was a Celtic bishop, but for other reasons. Anselm says, "I do not see how this could easily be done. For as no bishop ought to be consecrated for any church without the assent and agreement of the archbishop and other bishops throughout the province, so he

Paschal II, then wrote to Anselm and the King, ordering them to translate Herveus on the first opportunity, with the result that he was soon after translated to Ely. This marks a further step in the progress of the Latin Church in Wales, as it is the distinct recognition by the Pope of a Welsh bishop, as a bishop, and as one fit to hold any bishopric, an admission that the Pope would hardly have made as to any previous Welsh bishop. Here also, for the first time, for Chad's case is hardly analogous, it is recognized that a Welsh bishop was on an equality with the Latin bishops, and capable of being translated to any see. This dispute, though trivial in itself, marks two points in the history of the advance of the Latin Church over Wales, the recognition of Welsh bishops by the Pope, the recognition that Welsh bishops were in the same position in all respects as English bishops, and capable of holding English sees. In this instance again the advance of the Latin is due to Welsh feuds; it was the quarrel between the Welsh and the bishop that gave the opportunity for Latin interference and the assertion of Latin rights.

It now only remained for the Latins to claim that they had the right, independently of Welsh ideas and Welsh wishes, to place their own nominees, irrespective of race and any other consideration, in Welsh sees, and the subjugation of the Welsh episcopate to the Latin Church would be complete. The Celt had not long to wait for this further exercise of power. Wilfrid, Bishop of St.

who is consecrated bishop cannot be made a bishop of any other province without the agreement and consent of the archbishop and bishops of that same province, and the authority of the apostolic see, nor without leave from the archbishop and bishops of the province where he was consecrated, which permission cannot be given without long and private inquiry and deliberation by those without whom he could not be consecrated, even although his bishopric should seem to be so completely annihilated that he cannot stay there."—*Haddan and Stubbs*, i. 304.

David's, died in 1112—the Welsh proceeded at once to elect a successor. They chose Daniel, a son of Bishop Sulien, a brother of the late Bishop Rhyddmarch. Henry I now felt strong enough, with the aid of his Norman settlers, and having regard to what had been done at Llandaff and Bangor, to make a further stroke for the control of the Welsh Church. He set aside the nominee of the monks of St. David's, and appointed the queen's confessor, Bernard, a Norman, with no connection with Wales, and whose only right or title was Henry's pleasure, Bishop of St. David's. Bernard was consecrated Bishop in Westminster Abbey by the Bishops of Winchester, Lincoln, Salisbury, Bath, Llandaff, and the Irish Bishop of Limerick, and made his profession of canonical obedience to the archbishop. This act of Henry was the completion of the assertion of the rights of the English kings over the Welsh Church; she could no longer be said to be independent. Her bishops had lost all their distinctive character, and had become in precisely the same position as any of the English bishops. They had the same power and authority, the same rights, and were subject to the same jurisdiction as any other bishops of the Latin Church. The Welsh had no longer the right to say who their bishops should be, they had to submit to the rule and jurisdiction of such persons as the English kings chose to send them. The independence of the Welsh Church had gone, and gone without any struggle or resistance on the part of the Welsh, or any attempt to retain it.

At first, the quarrel between the bishops of St. David's and Llandaff as to the extent of their dioceses occupied the energies of the Norman bishops. Bernard made some few changes, notably in the constitution of the St. David's monastery, by altering it from its Celtic basis into a body

of canons on the Latin model, but the two South Wales bishops were mainly occupied in mutual disputes. A Scotchman, or a Welshman from the Scotch Abbey of St. Wurzburg, David, was elected by the Welsh chiefs to the see of Bangor, consecrated at Canterbury, and made the usual profession of obedience, so that the Welsh still seemed to have asserted their rights in North Wales. The position that the Welsh sees were suffragans of Canterbury was distinctly recognized in 1125 by the proposed transfer of Bangor, St. Asaph, and Chester from the province of Canterbury to that of York, and also by the fact that in the same year, at a synod held by the Pope's Legate in London, the Bishop of Llandaff was summoned to attend the synod with the other Canterbury suffragans. Urban tried, but without success, to get the synod to take up his quarrel with the Bishops of Hereford and St. David's; the matter was again brought on by him at a Council in London in 1132, and at another in 1133, thus showing that the English bishops were disposed to treat Welsh matters and Welsh disputes in precisely the same way they treated any quarrel that might have arisen between two English bishops. This all goes to show that the Latin Church was slowly establishing and consolidating her authority over Wales, and, as it seems, without any remonstrance or opposition by the Welsh.

Bernard also endeavoured to obtain the aid of another powerful agency to assist in extending Latin rule. Up till then the religious houses in Wales had been mainly Benedictine, but in France and in England a new order of monks—a reformed order of Benedictines—had arisen, who were destined to alter the whole future of monasticism and to play no inconsiderable part in Welsh ecclesiastical history. The Cistercian order came to England in 1128. In 1130 Richard de Granville established a colony at

Neath, and others rapidly followed. Margam, Whitland, Strata Florida, Cwmhir, were all Cistercian colonies in the diocese of St. David's, spreading Latin ideas and promoting the rule of the Latin Church, while Tintern, Caerleon, Grace Dieu, Llantarnan, and Dore did similar work in the Llandaff diocese. They soon made their influence felt; while most zealous for the Latin Church, they were equally zealous for themselves, and the great feature of their work was detaching the Welsh chiefs from the Celtic Church and bringing them over to the Latin side. In civil matters in opposition to the English kings, in cultivating a Welsh spirit, the Cistercians were more Welsh than the Welsh themselves, and they taught the Welsh princes the lesson that was fatal to Welsh independence, that the nationality of Wales could exist without the Church of Wales; that it was not necessary to maintain the Celtic Church to maintain Welsh independence. The Welsh chiefs listened to the charmer; they surrendered the rights of the Church, they lost the rights of the people.

The importance of the part played by the Cistercian order in the history of Wales has never yet been properly recognized. As allies of the Latin Church they were most valuable; probably they alone made it possible for her to succeed by inducing the Welsh chiefs to believe that the two causes, that of the Church and that of the people, could be separated. This they did most effectually, and won over the Welsh to the Latin Church. But having done this they stopped, and made themselves the allies of the Welsh chiefs in their resistance to the English kings. They became the advisers and the confidants of the Welsh in their struggle against England. It was a Cistercian monk who was the Welsh candidate for the see of Bangor in the great controversy with Canterbury. It was a Cistercian monk who was the companion of Llewellyn

when he died at Cilmeri. It was in a Cistercian house, Strata Florida, that the plan of Owen Glendower's rebellion was perfected. To the Cistercians, more than to any one else, the triumph of the Latin Church is due. Whether that triumph was not too dearly purchased by the rebellious spirit the Cistercian fostered, and was almost the sole means of fostering and preserving, is another matter. The part they played in each case was most important, and one that has profoundly affected Welsh history. It may be said that none of the other religious orders have left any real trace on Welsh history, and if they had never come to Wales the history of the country would have been much the same. This cannot be said of the Cistercians. Had they never come to Wales it is probable that the Wales of to-day would have resembled the adjoining counties of Salop and Hereford.

Strangely enough, the first note of resistance to the claims of the Latin Church over Wales came from the Latin bishops. As soon as his rival Urban died, or perhaps as soon as Henry I died, Bernard tried to assert his independence of the see of Canterbury, and applied to Pope Innocent II for a pall, thereby asserting the supremacy of the Welsh Church and her independence of Canterbury. This was the first sign of resistance that was raised against the claims of the Latin Church over Wales. It was followed in 1140, when the new Bishop of Bangor, Meurig, although elected by the Welsh, and consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, refused to take the oath of allegiance to the English king. But Meurig does not appear to have objected to sign the profession roll at Canterbury declaring his obedience to the Archbishop. He ultimately took the oath. The Welsh chiefs meanwhile appealed to Bernard to oppose Meurig, as a thief who did not enter the fold by the door but climbed

over the wall. Urban's successor in the see of Llandaff was Uchtryd, who, like his predecessor, was a married man with a family; he was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and signed the profession roll. One of his early acts was to quarrel with the monastery of Godcliff. The dispute was to be heard by Archbishop Theobald; another instance of submission to the authority of Canterbury. In 1143, Gilbert, the Bishop of St. Asaph, was consecrated by Archbishop Theobald, and signed the profession roll. By this act all the four Welsh bishops had admitted the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury and submitted to him, and may be considered as marking the actual admission by the Welsh of the authority of Canterbury over the four sees in Wales.

Having started the idea of the metropolitan jurisdiction of St. David's, it was pressed forward. Pope Lucius wrote in 1144 promising that his Legate should enquire into it next year; the chapter of St. David's wrote to Pope Eugenius III alleging that the bishops of St. David's had consecrated Welsh bishops before they submitted to Canterbury. It is probable that this was true, and that Welsh bishops had habitually consecrated bishops, but it is also true that the ceremonial differed, and the Celtic bishop was as far removed from the Latin as possible. Bernard pressed on the claims of St. David's. The Pope, Eugenius III, decided against Bernard, but appointed a time for specially considering what were the rights of St. David's. Bernard died before anything more could be done in the matter.

His successor was David, Archdeacon of Cardigan, another Norman nominee, who was forced on St. David's against the wishes of the chapter, and in opposition to their own elected candidate. Care was taken by Archbishop Theobald, having regard to the claim put forward

by St. David's to the Metropolitanship of Wales, to exact a very special form of profession of obedience.[1] It begins by stating the perils of disobedience and the virtues of obedience. "Quia per inobedientie culpam a Paradisi gaudiis exulamus per obedientie meritum et virtutem ad eadem necesse est gaudia revertamur. Itaque ego David ad regimen Menevensis ecclesie electus et a te reverende pater Theobalde sancte Cantuariensis Ecclesie Archiepiscope et totius Britannie primas consecrandus ex more Episcopus quemadmodum obedientie debitum mihi a meis subditis exhiberi volo ita tibi tuisque successoribus canonice substituendis et matri nostre Cantuarensi ecclesie in omnibus et per omnia canonice subjectionis et obedientie reverentiam profiteor et proprie manus signo confirmo."

The claim to the Metropolitanship of Wales, although as baseless as possible, yet marks a movement in the history of the conflict between the two Churches. It was an attempt on the part of the Welsh to regain the independence of their Church, and to shake themselves free from the control of Canterbury. Viewed in this light, it is of importance as a step in the fight, but in any other view it is one of the most idle of ecclesiastical disputes. The Welsh found that their Church was no longer free; that they were fast becoming subject to England; and the point on which matters turned was the primacy. Had they been able to shake themselves free from Canterbury by any means, and establish an independent Welsh control, there would have been some hope for the Celtic Church recovering lost ground, but Archbishop Theobald was too clever a man to allow anything of the sort, and the alteration of the form of oath is a sign of how determined the English were to retain their hold on the Welsh Church.

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 355.

The Bishop of Llandaff, Nicholas, did not keep strict enough discipline over his clergy, according to Theobald's view; he was disgraced, but was afterwards, at the intercession of Foliot, Bishop of Hereford, reconciled to the Archbishop, and entrusted with the administration of the diocese of Bath, another instance that now the Welsh bishops were considered in precisely the same position as any other bishop of the province of Canterbury. This is also shown by the Pope summoning David, Bishop of St. David's, as one of the suffragans of Canterbury, to the Court of Rome in 1163.

Another English custom was introduced, that of absentee bishops. The celebrated Geoffrey of Monmouth was consecrated Bishop of St. Asaph in 1152. His profession is in the same form as that of Bernard. Geoffrey died at Llandaff, at mass, in 1154, and appears never to have gone near his see. The next bishop, Godfrey, tried to do the same thing; he was Abbot of Abingdon, as well as bishop, and found in the quiet of his monastery a more pleasant abode than among the turbulent Welsh. But Theobald's successor, Becket, had other ideas of Church government; he wrote to Godfrey that he was either to return to his see, or to resign it. Owen, Prince of Gwynedd, had rebelled successfully, and Owen did not care to have Latin bishops forced on him. Becket ordered Owen to allow a bishop to be consecrated to Bangor subject to the see of Canterbury, but Owen refused. Becket, however, put in his nominee, the Archdeacon of Bangor, as custodian of the temporalities of the see, *sede vacante*. Becket wrote to the Pope, and the Pope ordered the clergy of Bangor to elect within two months. He also wrote to Becket telling him, if the clergy did not do so, to elect a bishop himself. Becket absolved the Bangor clergy from any obligation to elect Owen's nominee, and pressed

on them the necessity of at once electing a bishop. He also urged Owen to agree to the election of the Pope's candidate. For eight years, from 1161 to 1169, this controversy proceeded, and Bangor remained without a Latin bishop subject to Canterbury. There is some evidence that an Irish bishop filled the see, or rather did what episcopal work was wanted, in the interval. The struggle, however, is noteworthy, as showing that whatever the clergy may have done, and however they surrendered the rights of the Church and of the country, the Welsh chiefs, when they had the power, refused to recognize the rights of the see of Canterbury. They clearly clung to the old tribal idea, that each independent body or tribe should choose its own bishop, and that such bishop could not be appointed for them by a foreign authority. Owen's death, in 1189, put an end to the dispute.

There is another incident about this time which shows the peculiar position the Welsh bishops occupied, namely, that they were partly bishops under English kings, and partly under Welsh princes, but wholly under Canterbury. In 1169, Becket, being then in exile, wrote to all the suffragans of the see of Canterbury, ordering them to issue a sentence of excommunication against Henry II; each English bishop was to enforce it throughout his diocese, "per totam episcopatum vestram in omnibus ecclesiis." The three Welsh bishops, St. David's, Llandaff, and St. Asaph (Bangor was left out), were to enforce it in all the king's land in their dioceses, "per totam terram ejus quæ in episcopatu vestro est in omnibus ecclesiis". Drawing forcibly the distinction that while the rights of the English king in Wales were only over his land, the rights of the archbishop in Wales were quite independent of any temporal prince, and extended over the whole country.

Among those who took part in the coronation of Prince Henry, in 1170, were the Bishops of Llandaff and St. Asaph; this, Becket regarded as a revolt against the see of Canterbury, and so induced Pope Alexander III to suspend them with the other bishops, who did so, "ab omni episcopali officio", for acting "contra jura Cantuarensia". Another incident shows the complete subjection of the Welsh bishops to Canterbury. Godfrey, of St. Asaph, continued to consider the repose of Abingdon pleasanter than the glory of St. Asaph. In 1175, at a council at Westminster, he resigned to Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury, the see of St. Asaph. "Episcopatum suum nullo cogente resignavit in manum Cant. archiepiscopi et tradidit ei annulum suum et baculum pastoralem et ipse Cantuar. privavit cum concessi ordinis dignitate et loco et statuit loco ipsius et consecravit magistrum Adam in episcopum sancti Asaph."[1]

The control of the see of Canterbury over the Welsh bishoprics was now, therefore, complete; she not only appointed and consecrated the Welsh bishops, she suspended them, restored them, and they resigned their sees into her hands. Yet, at the time of her triumph, the great contest for the independence of the Welsh Church was on the point of beginning. Giraldus de Barri had become Archdeacon of Brecon, and the long struggle for the metropolitan rights of St. David's was about to break out afresh. The same year, 1175, was marked by another step in the subjection of the Welsh Church. The Abbey of Gloucester, a Benedictine house, claimed a series of lands in Wales, among others, the church, or monastery, of Llanbadarn Vawr, in Cardiganshire. It therefore became a question whether it was to remain in Welsh hands, or be given to the Normans. The Norman bishop

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 378.

of St. David's, David, decided in favour of the Norman abbey. It was, however, one thing to decide, and another to carry out the decision, for thirteen years later, in 1188, when Archbishop Baldwin went on his tour through Wales to preach the Crusade, he found the Welsh still in possession, with a Welsh abbot, and his sons as clerks. This is a good instance how the Normans were trying to oust the Welsh from all ecclesiastical offices, and to retain and strengthen their hold on the country by means of the zeal and energy of the Latin monks.

Another vacancy occurring in the see of St. David's, a Cluniac monk, Peter de Leia, Prior of Wenlock, was forced by the Archbishop into the see—the Welsh nominee being set aside. A new bishop, Guy, was also consecrated to Bangor. The Bishop of Llandaff was suspended for interfering in the matters of the abbey of Malmesbury; and to complete the rule of the Latin Church over Wales, in 1187, Archbishop Baldwin, who was appointed legate in 1186, made a visitation of Wales. Practically he met with no resistance, a fact which shows the triumph of the Latin Church more forcibly than anything else. But, at Radnor, certain of the St. David's chapter (*Canones Menevenses*)[1] strove to persuade the Welsh prince, Rhys, to protest that Baldwin ought not to be allowed to proceed, as, if he did, it would ruin the right of St. David's. That is, the canons were desirous of preserving the rights and liberties of the Celtic Church, but, like all the Welsh princes, Rhys either was too selfish or too religious to move; he submitted and allowed the Archbishop to follow out his plans, and to prove that Celtic Wales had, in fact, surrendered to the Latin Church, while her princes stood by, and offered not even a protest.

This apathy of the Welsh chiefs, combined with the

[1] Giraldus, *Itin. Camb.*, ii, 1.

zeal of the Normans and the Latin monks, fixed the Canterbury fetters on Wales. The attempt to regain her lost liberties, as shown by the disputes as to the sees of Bangor and St. David's, can only be regarded as the protest, the unavailing protest, of the holders of Welsh bishoprics for more power, and for freedom from the Latin rule. The St. David's contest was far more a personal than a national matter, and was kept up more by the vanity of Giraldus, than by any idea of patriotism. Hubert Walter, the Archbishop of Canterbury, tried to force Robert of Shrewsbury on the see of Bangor; this was resisted by the Welsh, and this was, so far as the facts are known, far more the case of a struggle for independence than the petty squabbles that surround the St. David's controversy. It is worthy of note that in the Bangor fight, the Welsh put forward a Cistercian monk, the sub-prior of Aberconway, to fight their battle against the Archbishop's nominee; thus showing how completely the Cistercians, although Latin and not Celtic Churchmen, had identified themselves with the cause of the Welsh. The one point that the St. David's controversy proves is that the Archbishop and the English thought it unsafe to allow a Welshman, especially so violent a Welshman as Giraldus, to hold the see of St. David's, and it was this, more than anything else, that told against him. There is nothing like evidence in support of his statement of the metropolitan claim of St. David's, and what evidence there is is all the other way; but in spite of all this, the whole quarrel forms a very instructive piece of Welsh Church history.

The failure of Giraldus, and also the failure of the Welsh at Bangor, must have strengthened the position of the Latin Church. Yet there seems to have been some idea, even in Latin minds, that whatever were the rights

of the Latin Church over England, they did not necessarily extend over Wales. For instance, in the first Bull of Innocent III, which excommunicated John, no special mention was made of Wales. So another Bull was issued reciting the fact that Wales had not been mentioned, and ordering the same procedure to be followed "cum et ipsæ Cant. metropoli sunt subjectæ."[1] Wales was released from this interdict in 1212, two years before England, and in 1216 Wales was again placed under an interdict, because it was held by the barons against Henry III."[2]

The history of the Church in Wales now enters on another phase; the supremacy of the Latin was established, and the Celtic Church only made its existence felt by some peculiar custom or rite. The Welsh, although admitting a foreign ecclesiastical authority, were opposed to a foreign temporal power, and used the Latin Church as a means of carrying on an intrigue against England. Thus David, the prince of North Wales, in 1244 tried to enter into an agreement with Pope Innocent IV to substitute him instead of the king as his feudal lord. To get some control over the clergy, in 1246 the king claimed all the advowsons in Wales that had been the property of the Welsh princes, as belonging to the crown of England by right of conquest, so as to fill them with his own friends. When Edward I came to the throne in 1272 he found Wales a hotbed of rebellion, and he must have felt that it was necessary to assert his power in some effective way. The Statute of Wales, 12 Edward I, is in the form of a proclamation by Edward to all his subjects of his land of Snowdon, and of others his lands in Wales. It recites that "Divine providence, among other gifts of its dispensation, had of its favour wholly and entirely transferred under our proper dominion the land of Wales, theretofore

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 452. [2] *Ibid.*, i, 457.

subject to us in feudal right, and hath annexed and united the same unto the Crown of England as a member of the same body." It then goes on to state that having heard the Welsh laws, certain of them are abolished, some allowed, some corrected; others have been ordained and added to. The result of the statute was something like the old example of Patrick and Dubhthach; some of the old laws were kept intact, some were retained with alterations, some new laws were added. But the Statute did not set up English law in Wales. In the counties of Anglesea, Carnarvon, Merioneth, and Flint, sheriffs and other officers were appointed, and their duties defined. In the same places, coroners were appointed and their duties defined. Certain writs were directed to apply to Wales. Trials as to inheritance were to be by the law of Wales; trials as to land to be by jury, as to personalty by the law of Wales. In cases of crime, English law was to prevail. It will thus be seen that, so far from the legislation of Edward doing away with Welsh law, it expressly recognized it as legal. The great change was in the appointment of Royal officers, with defined duties, to see the king's law in Wales carried out. As to this, Edward was only partially successful: while great powers were given such officers, greater were retained by the Crown. As has been said already, Welsh law was not abrogated, but a good deal of early Welsh law was assimilated, and the mixture of native law with an infusion of English became, until the time of Henry VIII, the law governing Wales. It is true the Statute speaks in the preamble of the whole of Wales, but the enacting part only applies to certain parts of North Wales, the modern counties of Anglesea, Carnarvon, Merioneth, and Flint. In the rest of Wales the law remained unaltered; in the parts under the jurisdiction of the Lords Marchers they held supreme authority; in the

other parts the Welsh law still prevailed, so that in Wales there were three distinct systems in force: (1) the old Welsh law; (2) the Welsh law modified by the Statute of Wales; and (3) the customs that prevailed in the parts conquered by the Lords Marchers. The old state of things still continued; there was not one law that was universal and binding throughout the whole country, but different laws in the different parts. This, to some extent, gave the Latin Church her opportunity. She was the only body that professed to have power and jurisdiction throughout all Wales. Whoever the temporal ruler might be, whatever was the temporal law in force in any part, the Latin Church claimed to be supreme in every place and to know nothing of the diversity of temporal rulers. The Welsh idea had been that the rule of the Church corresponded with the rule of each petty temporal authority; against this the Latins fought and established their own supreme ecclesiastical rule. Doubtless the diversity of temporal rulers made this difficult, and the fact that Peckham in his visitation had to provide different regulations for each diocese, shows this difficulty. The idea of a Church overstepping the limits of the temporal power, or combining more than one temporal authority in its jurisdiction, was a novel notion to the Celt.

The Statute of Wales was followed up by an attempt to settle ecclesiastical matters. The then Archbishop of Canterbury was John Peckham, a Franciscan friar, whom the Pope had appointed Archbishop in preference to Edward's nominee, Burnell. On his appointment, Peckham at once showed that he did not intend to suffer any divided authority in Church matters. At the Council of Reading, in 1279, he endeavoured to make the clergy independent of the King's Courts. He failed, but the incident indicates the man whose lot it was to organize the Latin Church in

Wales. Peckham at once began negotiations with the Welsh. He inquired into the state of things in Wales. The Bishop of Llandaff acted as his assessor in the case of a bishop who had five sons. Peckham wrote to Roger de Mortimer and his daughter, Isabella, requiring them to desist from allowing a suit, as to the right of patronage, to be heard in the King's Court. In 1282, Edward ordered Peckham to excommunicate the Welsh rebels. Peckham went down to Wales to try to persuade Llewellyn to submit, but in vain; and in the autumn he again entered into negotiations with the Welsh, and attempted, again without success, to bring about an agreement between the Welsh and Edward. On Llewellyn's death, in December 1282, Peckham entertained some scruples about giving him absolution. In 1284, Peckham began that visitation of the Welsh dioceses which finally set up the Latin rule. In the matters prescribed after his visitation it will be seen how this was done. The dress of the clergy was to be brought into accordance with the dress elsewhere. The Legatine constitutions of Otho and Ottobone as to chastity were to be kept; the canonical hours observed, and the provisions of the Council of Lambeth on the reservation of the Host. The custom of more than one priest holding the same benefice was abolished. If the rector were non-resident, vicars were to be appointed. Tithes were to be paid by tenants in dower and mortmain, and payment enforced. Tellers of dreams, auguries, and idlers were to be discouraged, and the visits of friars encouraged. In writing to Edward, Peckham urged that everything that was contrary to the custom of the English Church was to be done away with ("quicquid vero ad relevationem Ecclesie discrepat ab usibus Anglicanis illud destruunt et evertunt").[1] In his injunctions for St. David's, Peckham

[1] *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 569.

provided that canons were to reside, clerical delinquents punished, not by fine but by deposition. The Bishop of St. David's (Bec) made his protest against the Archbishop's visitation, but it was overruled, and the right established; but Peckham records the fact that for the future the forms of the profession the Bishops of St. David's had to make at their consecration were to be altered, so as to expressly do away with any such claim.

This visitation marks the extent of the triumph of the Latin Church over the Celtic. Wales was conquered, and was to feel the power of the conqueror both in Church and State; the Welsh sees were treated as English sees. Shortly after, Edward claimed the profits of the Welsh sees during a vacancy, in the same way as in the case of the English bishoprics. In theory the victory was complete, the alien rule was far more rigidly established in Church than in State. Edward's laws did not purport to extend over the whole of Wales; whole districts were outside the king's writ; but all Wales, whoever was the temporal sovereign, passed under the rule of Canterbury. The final stage was reached when the Pope appointed a bishop (John of Monmouth), to Llandaff by provision, in 1295.

Although in theory the Latin Church had triumphed, yet in fact a number of Welsh customs survived. It was impossible to root out the tribal system, or the ideas based on it, in any summary fashion. Many Celtic customs—numerous holders of one benefice, married clergy, and, perhaps, even some heathen customs—still lingered; although an outward respect was paid to the Latin rule, the Celtic practice was not by any means dead. As has already been pointed out, the idea of establishing colleges, and so making the clergy more Latin and less Celtic, may have been due to this. It is only by a close study of the

social history of the country during the next two hundred and fifty years that it can be said with any accuracy how far the Latin Church really got hold of Wales. There is not wanting evidence to prove that the process was very much the same as the original conversion of the country. There was a certain amount of outward conformity to Latin rules, but behind all this the Celtic ideas prevailed. As it had formerly been Paganism with an outward veneer of Christianity, so now it was Celtic with the outward and visible sign of Latin Christianity. The Latins, however, received powerful help from two causes. The Cistercian monks led the Welsh chiefs to espouse the Latin religion, partly by aiding them in plotting against the English. Every Cistercian house was a hotbed of treason; witness Strata Florida in the movement of Owen Glendower. So the native Welsh found themselves without any leader, and without the power of combined resistance. The policy of the English Government was to degrade the Welsh and not to encourage the ordination of any Welshman, as none of them were considered worthy of a place of trust.[1] So arose an alien Church supported by alien clergy, and not the least of the feelings of the Welsh against the Church was that a body of men who were supported by Wales, and who ought to be, before all things, Welsh, were all foreigners, and no Welshman could be legally admitted a member of the body. Orders were to the Welsh a closed door. It also happened that, from the fact that the English and foreigners were mostly found near the towns, and the towns being the places where most religious houses were to be found, that except in some Cistercian houses all the life, both civil and religious, of the country was found in or round the towns.

[1] See Stat. 4 Henry IV, c. 32; and *Haddan and Stubbs*, i, 583.

The Celts and the Latins did not assimilate, and in the country places the Welsh still retained their old religious ideas and observances. The clergy, although not Welsh, became more and more tolerant of the Welsh, and, while in name Latin, with them local ideas largely prevailed. The Celtic customs still lived in spite of the fact that nominally they were superseded by the Latin. It is obvious that this state of things was, if not the result of, in a great measure due to, the mode of government. The threefold government, as it might be called, that prevailed in Wales, was one that lent itself to rebellion. From 1284 to 1534 Wales was a hotbed of sedition, and it was doubtless felt by Henry VIII that it was really necessary to take some steps to stamp out treason. It would be foreign to the purpose of this book to go through all the statutes that were passed to keep the Welsh quiet. It may be fairly said that it was to Wales the English kings had to look whenever rebellion or invasion was feared. There are, however, one or two points connected with this period that deserve notice. The first is, that the jurisdiction of the king's courts in Welsh matters was limited to cases where the Lords Marchers were parties to any litigation; in other matters the courts of the Lords Marchers decided all questions. The result would be that the secular arm was probably far weaker, and far less able to support the Church, than would have been the case in any country where the royal authority was supreme. The next point is that all matters in which the bishop was interested were tried, not in Wales, but in the next English county. The reason usually given for this is that the bishop was so powerful it was impossible to get a fair trial in Wales. Hence it would follow that the power of the bishop and the bishop's courts would be much less than might have been expected, as any matter in which

the bishop was interested had to be tried elsewhere. The bishop could not get the aid of the sheriff or any other executive officer to carry out his orders. This would tend greatly to limit the power of the Welsh bishops to compel the Welsh to obey their orders. All these matters tended to prevent the Latin Church getting the authority she would have done elsewhere. This conflict of authorities, disputes as to jurisdiction, and the difficulty in enforcing the law, if it, on the one hand, kept alive treason and rebellion, on the other, it served to lessen the authority of the Latin clergy.

The want of a central authority, both for civil and ecclesiastical matters, was greatly felt, and it led to rather a startling exercise of the royal prerogative, namely, the establishment by the crown, of its own authority and without statute, of a court that should have jurisdiction over all the parts of Wales where the king's writ did not run. This court, "the Court of the Lord President of the Marches of Wales," is said to have been created by Edward IV. It is not unworthy of notice that all the lords presidents before the Reformation were ecclesiastics: Alcock, Bishop of Worcester; Smyth, Bishop of Lincoln; Blyth, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield; Voysey, Bishop of Exeter; Lee and Sampson, Bishops of Coventry and Lichfield. Although the court had not any express ecclesiastical jurisdiction, yet there can be no doubt that a court whose duty it was to enforce the law, keep order and put down abuses, presided over by an ecclesiastic, would of necessity form a most powerful engine in aid of the power of the bishop. Nothing probably gave the Latin Church greater power in Wales than this Court, and if ever its records are published it will show that Latin Churchmen did not wear the sword in vain. It would have been a powerful engine if presided over by a layman,

but a court, of which an ecclesiastic was the permanent head, must of necessity have been a terrible force in advancing ecclesiastical, that is Latin, ideas; added to this, some of the Welsh bishops were always members of the court. The name of the Bishop of St. David's usually appears, and those of the other Welsh bishops from time to time.

The legislation of Henry VIII was of two kinds: first, statutes relating exclusively to Wales; and, secondly, laws for England that were made to apply to Wales. The effect of the two classes was little short of a revolution. The two great Acts as to Wales are the 27 Henry VIII, c. 26, and the 34 Henry VIII, c. 26. The first is entitled "An Act for law and justice to be ministered in Wales in like form as it is in this Realm." It recites that Wales has already been under the Imperial crown of the realm as a very member and joynt of the same. It enacts that the different lordships marcher be annexed to the different shires, and that there shall be sheriffs, escheators, and other officers executing and returning processes as in England. Commissioners were to be appointed to divide some of the shires into hundreds, and the shires as constituted were to send members to Parliament. Commissioners were to be appointed to ascertain what the Welsh Laws were, and to say which of them should be in force in the future. Power was given to the king within the next three years to suspend or revoke any part of the Act.

One result of this Act was to do away with the divided authority Edward I had left, and make royal officers, as in England, have jurisdiction among the Welsh. It broke up Wales into counties, and placed those counties under the same laws as the English, thus making, as far as possible, the law the same for England and

Wales. It was followed by the second Act, 34 and 35 Henry VIII, c. 26, "An Act for certain ordinances in the King's Majesty's Dominions and Principality of Wales." It recites that the king had made certain ordinances for Wales which he was pleased to allow to be thereby enacted. It divides Wales into twelve counties, confirms the boundaries of the hundreds as ascertained by the Commissioners, continues the President and Council of the Marches, provides for the appointment of justices and holding sessions in each county, and for the law to be administered according to the law of England. The Chancellor was to appoint the justices. No fines were to be taken for murder or felony: all lands in Wales were to be regulated by English laws.

The effect of this Act was to establish English law in Wales, and to apply to Wales the existing English law; and all laws that were in future passed as to England applied equally to Wales, thus extending at one stroke all the ecclesiastical laws of Henry VIII to Wales. For instance, as has been shown, one of the points the Welsh fought for most stubbornly was the right of the clergy to marry; the result of this Act was to extend to Wales the Six Articles (31 Henry VIII, c. 14), one of the provisions of which made it felony, that is, a capital offence, both in the man and the woman, for a priest to live with a woman, even if they had contracted marriage. It is difficult to state the tremendous effect that this statute, incorporating Wales with England, must have had on the Church in Wales. Previously the authority of both King and Pope was recognized, but it was a matter of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and was difficult to enforce; now the king's officers would enforce the law as in any other part of England. The Pope had disappeared, but the Welsh were compelled to set up Henry in

his place, as the supreme head of the Church, next after Christ. These might, however, be more matters of theory than of practice; but other parts of Henry's legislation came closer home. The Acts as to the payment of tithes and ecclesiastical fees, and the powers given to the civil authorities to enforce them, must have had a great effect on the minds of the Welsh. We read with astonishment the arbitrary laws of Henry VIII. Whether the time required them or not, is quite another question; that they were arbitrary even their admirers will admit. Imagine the feelings of the Welsh to find suddenly that, not directly but by a side wind, the whole of this arbitrary code had become part of the law under which they lived. As an instance of what was the real effect of Henry's legislation, it is only necessary to go to the reign of his elder daughter. The Bishop of St. David's was burnt in the streets of Carmarthen. The person who burnt him was the sheriff, and the sheriff only got his authority to do so from this Act 34 and 35 Henry VIII, c. 26. If this innocent looking Statute, which seems merely to be a reform of procedure, had not been passed, the Bishop of St. David's could not have been burnt in Wales. This is only one instance of the changes that were made; it is hard to realize how great the alteration was, and what tremendous power the Church gained, power which she had never before possessed so far as Wales was concerned. The whole state of things was changed; a new authority, armed with new and arbitrary rights, was set up. In England this power had always existed; in Wales the legislation of Henry VIII first gave it sway.

In addition to this, the practical result of the legislation of Henry VIII was to do away with Welsh laws and Welsh customs, and to establish English law as the sole system in the country. The legislation of Edward I had

left, not only districts exempt from English law, but even where English law prevailed, the Welsh laws and customs were not wholly abrogated. To a certain extent, up to the time of Henry VIII, the Welsh law was still the law of the country, and the *Cyvreithiau Cymry* and the *Leges Wallice* show to what extent the Welsh law prevailed. But under Henry VIIIth's legislation, all Welsh laws became obsolete, its object was to enforce English law, English procedure, and English rule, and only these, to the exclusion of all others. Had this stood alone, it would of necessity have created discontent; a country never submits without a remonstrance to wholesale changes in its laws and ideas, more especially where, as here, a system which had become so much a part of Welsh nature as the tribal system was swept away almost by the stroke of a pen. Before the change was fully felt, or the alteration realized, another followed, which had, if possible, as wide-reaching an effect, the setting up of a new religious system. Whatever the Anglican system may have been elsewhere, it was in Wales an entirely novel arrangement, and introduced totally new notions and conceptions on religious matters. In Wales, the Act of Uniformity, whatever it did in England, established a new system of Church government wholly opposed to Welsh ideas. Up till this, a system that may profanely be termed a mutual one, had prevailed; this was done away with, and in its place was substituted a system that was based upon the personal opinion of the crown. Every tribesman, as a member of the tribe, had kept up the Church as part of the tribal organization; henceforth, every man was to attend church, because the Government ordered him, to hear at church what it pleased the Government to permit; to pay to support a church because it was the will of the Government that that

church should be supported. We talk of freedom;—a greater tyranny never existed than the Act of Uniformity, as it worked in Wales. Religion was no longer a question of private judgment, no longer a question of doctrine, of principle, or of belief. It was all reduced to the arbitrary order of an arbitrary power. "You, each of you, whatever may be your opinions, shall go to Church, and shall maintain the Church because I choose you should; any opposition to this, any refusal, is highly penal." In any country such a state of things would have caused difficulties. We talk of the tyranny of Philip II in the Netherlands; except in the way he enforced his rule, it was not one bit more tyrannical than the English system in Wales, and he had at least this excuse, he was carrying out the orders of a Church he believed infallible. In Wales, the system was not based on an authority which claimed infallibility, it had the cool cruelty to assert that it was based upon private judgment, the private judgment of a fallible mortal, varied from time to time by his ideas of temporal expediency.

In no country can the whole foundation of a religious system be changed, even by a Tudor sovereign, in an instant. Under no possible circumstances could a change from a mutual to a State-religious system have been carried out without friction. But, in Wales, the difficulty was increased by the change being not merely a religious, but also a social change. The effect of the Tudor legislation was to turn the clergy into an army of landlords, entitled to exact their rents like any other landlords, to apply, to collect those rents, the English modes of enforcing English laws—modes as arbitrary to Welsh ideas as they were novel. This double change from Welsh to English law, from Welsh to English religion, would, under any circumstances, have caused difficulties

however it was carried out; unfortunately it was carried out by men who considered that the first duty of a people was obedience to their will, however arbitrary, and however repulsive that will was to the people. It was not unnatural that the Welsh should dislike the change, and, as in England, the change was opposed by the Puritans; the only hope Wales saw was to throw herself into the arms of the Puritans, and to oppose in every way the new system. The parochial clergy in Wales became more and more like English landlords, and less and less like Celtic priests. This change intensified the Welsh resistance, and the history of the Marprelate movement shows the pitch of frenzy to which the Welsh were driven. The opposition was deepened by the High Church views the Anglican clergy began to develope under the Stuarts. The theory of Divine right was most utterly opposed to every Celtic idea. To be told that the religious rites to which the Welshman had always considered himself legally entitled to receive from the priests of the tribe, were only given as a matter of grace, and might at any time be withheld at the option of the priest; to be told that the clergy were a superior order of beings to the tribesmen, and had a Divine commission to give or to withhold all ecclesiastical functions; that they could refuse at their own pleasure to christen a child, or to bury a corpse, when the Welsh had been always taught that the tribesman had a right to demand these services of the Church because he was a tribesman, naturally drove the Welsh into incipient rebellion. Added to these, when the priest claimed new rights and enforced them by novel methods, at once alien and arbitrary to Welsh ideas, there is little wonder that the gulf which separated the Church as by law established, and the old Celtic religious system, was continually widening. When the bishops' registers

of the Welsh sees for the last half of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries are published, we shall learn, what we do not yet fully know, how the Anglican establishment was rivetted on Wales, and made hateful to the Welsh. It must not be forgotten that the Act of Uniformity made attendance at church compulsory, a provision that must have been hateful to a body of men who loved priestly, as little as royal supremacy, who hated the control of a foreign authority, whether that authority resided in London or in Rome. We do not always remember, in considering Welsh Church history, that before Laud went to Canterbury, he was Bishop of St. David's, nor how hateful a man so strong in his own sacerdotalism, so convinced that in his arbitrary rule he was doing God service, must have been to the Welsh. No greater contrast can be imagined than such a man at the head of the diocese of St. David's, and the old Celtic chief of the tribe of the Saint. Laud brought down the Anglican Church and the English crown; but the Puritanism that succeeded him was not much more in accordance with Welsh ideas than his sacerdotalism. It was equally opposed to the Celtic tribal ideas, equally alien to Welsh religious notions. Had it lasted, it is probable that the feeling in Wales against it would have been as strong as was the feeling against the tyranny that preceded it.

It is the fashion of modern church writers to deplore the lethargy which fell upon the Church in Wales from the Restoration to the rise of Methodism. From an ecclesiastical point of view it was a most deplorable period, but it is the result of this lethargic interval that the Anglican establishment has been able to gain such hold as she has in Wales, a hold she could have obtained in no other way. As

discipline relaxed, the Anglican priest tended more and more in the direction of a layman—a man on the same level with the farmer and horsedealer, who was not afraid to sit and drink with them; who would sink the Church and ecclesiastical theories, and become as much one of the villagers as the old Celtic tribal priest had been. The parson no longer occupied, or claimed to occupy, a superior position to the other villagers: their tastes became his tastes, their wants and desires were also his. It is not a pleasant, but it is a true picture; it is by these means that the Anglican Church has obtained her hold in Wales, and become more popular, because more identified with the people than she had ever previously been. Methodism, or rather Nonconformity, brought about a change, the effects of which we have yet to see. From its greater flexibility it approached more nearly to the old Welsh tribal idea of the mutual rights of the people and the religious body, and in so far as she satisfied the Welsh ideas, she became accepted by the Welsh.

At last, some fifty years ago, the Church found that Wales was slipping from her hands, and the great Welsh Church revival began, which we are now asked to regard with such thankfulness and admiration. But this revival has really shaken, and, as it proceeds, will further shake, the hold of the establishment in Wales. The more the Church asserts herself, the further she drifts from the Welsh idea of a Church. She becomes again the foreign system, alien alike to Welsh ideas and Welsh aspirations. As long as she remained quiet, and did not assert her paramount claims, her superior authority, so long was she tolerated; once she rouses herself into life and asserts her right to rule, she arouses all the opposition that has always existed in

Wales to a ruling Church. A Church revival means a greater assertion of the rights of the establishment, therefore hostility to the establishment, and the more the clergy try to enforce the new Anglicanism of to-day, the more do they drive Wales towards Nonconformity. It is not by its own strength that Nonconformity succeeds; it is simply because it is the one means that enables the Welsh to resist the revived sacerdotalism that eager ecclesiastics are trying to force upon her. Nonconformity comes far nearer the old tribal idea of Celtic Christianity than anything else. A Welshman who studies his country's history sees that there is nothing so near the old Welsh religious system as Nonconformity—nothing so opposed to it as the establishment; he therefore adopts Nonconformity, not because he loves it, but because he hates the establishment, regarding it as trying to coerce him and his opinions. The Welsh idea was, has been, and is, "the harmony of the Church and the people, the right of either party from the other and in the other." The Anglican idea is, that the Church lays down the rule of what is to be done; the people have to obey without question or dispute, the Church bestows her privileges on an obedient people, not that the people can claim them as of right. For instance, the Celtic Church speaks of "the things the Church is bound to give the people, burial to be made in it, baptism, and communion." The line the Anglican clergy took on the burial question was perfectly legal, perfectly in accordance with the ideas of the Anglican Church, but it was utterly opposed to all Celtic notions. The tribesman was entitled to be buried because he was a tribesman, whatever else he might be. The Anglican idea was that only a select number of the tribesmen, those who have conformed to her religious ideas, can be buried in the sacred ground of the village and with sacred

rites. This was in direct opposition to Celtic ideas, and it was the survival of those ideas that led to the bitter struggle over the dead Dissenter. The Nonconformist represented the tribal, the Anglican, the alien Church.

So it is with other disputed points. The old struggle between the tribal and State religions is always arising. It is the consequence of the action of Elizabeth and her advisers in taking upon themselves to set up a system of religious rule which was neither one thing nor the other; which was as alien, or even more so, than the Latin system to the Celtic, and equally opposed to tribal ideas. The Tudor notion was that their will was law, that all opposition to that will had to be put down by force, but here, as in other cases, force has proved to be no remedy. The Welsh idea, though often crushed, has not yet been uprooted. The more the Church system is enforced, the greater activity she displays, the more points of divergence appear. It would be beyond the scope of this book to discuss the different matters on which the established Church and the Welsh are at variance. They all come back to the fundamental difference between the two sets of ideas, the difference between a local and an Imperial Church; whether a locality is to manage its own religious affairs, or whether a foreign individual is the supreme head next after Christ, and therefore able to enforce certain rules on the country. It is impossible to reconcile the two theories; for over a thousand years they have been at war, and will be so while the world lasts. They represent the conflict that the Celtic Church has been waging from A.D. 600 until the present day, first against the Latin, and then against the Anglican Church. The Anglican says that local control of religious matters is an accursed abomination; the Celt replies that Imperial regulation of religious rites is the unclean thing. As

each can only appeal to the right of private judgment, both might argue for ever, but the party of Imperial control possess the advantage of having the power of the sword as the final argument. In law the Imperial party are in the right, and the Church says that Churchmen are bound to obey the law. The national party reply, the law should be altered; so far, both stand on fair ground, yet neither are content to remain on it, but enter upon questions wholly beside the point with all the heat, all the bigotry, and all the falsehood that ecclesiastical controversies invariably invoke. Both parties, in their zeal for their religion, or rather for political success, neglect the historical side of the question. Nothing dies so hard as the memories of what we learnt as children. Most of us believe, and will believe until our dying day, that in the contest with the Welsh St. Augustine was right, and the Welsh were wrong; that the controversy between them was over matters of ecclesiastical detail, never of any real importance, and long since passed away and forgotten. If Welshmen are in earnest in making the most of Welsh history, this idea should no longer be allowed to prevail. The men who withstood the great Latin monk in his pride and in his success should receive from their countrymen the credit they deserve. Wales possesses too few men who stood up for her and her rights for love of Wales alone, and not for self-interest, that she can afford to neglect these early defenders of her rights and her religion. Their names are forgotten, the replies they gave are probably fictitious, but the fact remains clear that Welshmen opposed, and opposed with success, the advance of the Latin Church. It is not mere patriotic pride, mere love of glorifying the past, and those who acted in the great days of old, that should cause this to be done. It brings out into prominence two facts too

often forgotten, but both of which have a wide and important bearing on even the modern side of the Welsh Church. It brings into its true light the stand the Celtic Church made against the Latin advance. It also brings out, if the Reformation was really what a large party of Anglicans now say it was, a mere stripping off the abuses and growths that had in the course of time encrusted the Church of Augustine, that we have to go back, not as is usually said, to one ancient Church, but to two distinct Churches, founded upon two distinct bases, and having little in common. Which was the true Church is a matter for theologians; which was the most ancient is a matter for the historian, and no historian will hesitate to say that so far as these islands are concerned the most ancient is the Celtic. But a return to the Celtic Church would be more impossible than a return to the Heptarchy.

It is difficult to try to depict the feelings or the language of some of the High Anglicans of to-day at the state of things in religious matters the organization of the Celtic Church discloses. Sooner than return to that, they would say, the errors and abuses that prevailed at the Reformation would be preferable. But if the Reformation was not a return to the original Church of Wales, it was the introduction of a new system of Church government, and thus the result is that, whatever may be the case in England, the system now existing in Wales only dates from the accession of Elizabeth, some three and a half centuries. All that we have been in the habit of hearing as to the antiquity of the existing Church in Wales, all the stock-in-trade of certain popular speakers and writers, rests upon a most doubtful basis, even if it rests upon any at all. It is impossible, if history is regarded, to escape from the position that either the Reformation was a return to the old ecclesiastical system that prevailed in

this country, or that it was the introduction of a new one. It will be conceded by everyone that it was not a return to the old Celtic Church; it can therefore only be, as it is admitted it was, a change from what existed at the time, the setting up of a new system. To that system was transferred all the property and all the privileges of the displaced Church which were taken from it and given to the new body. In England it was different; there the Reformation was a return to the Christianity introduced by Augustine and Theodore, but that Christianity had never obtained in Wales. There a different system existed, that was partly displaced by the Latin Christianity enforced by the Normans and Plantagenets; but this was overthrown at the Reformation, and there was no return to the old system, the Celtic, but a new one, the Anglican, was introduced and established by law.

The consequences of this are important. It is a very different thing to argue as to the sacredness of endowments that have existed before the time of legal memory, and the sacredness of endowments that have their origin at a recent date. Three centuries in the history of a Church are but as yesterday. The Celtic Church of Wales saw the Roman legions in Britain; the Welsh Church of to-day would not, in point of antiquity, come within the list a modern antiquary made of the present noble and gentle families of England and Wales.

It will be thus seen that the true position of the Celtic Church, the long struggle she has maintained, are matters that possess more than a mere antiquarian interest, and have a most important bearing on the question of the present position of the Welsh Church. Whether that Church should remain or should be disestablished is not a question for the historian, but the politician; but if the present Welsh Church falls, it will not be the Church of

David and Teilo, but of Elizabeth and Laud. This is not generally recognized, but no one who will take the trouble to examine the ecclesiastical history of Wales can dispute it. For some reason, probably because it is far easier to use general language in historical matters than to condescend to particulars, the defenders of the Establishment are allowed to apply or misapply history as they think fit, and the Celtic Church of Wales is forgotten or ignored. It is a pity this should be so; the Church does not need to be defended by any such weapons, and no misstatement of history will really help her case. Whatever may be her fate as an establishment is, from an historical standpoint, of secondary importance. It is of real importance from every standpoint that the most should be made of all existing evidence as to the Celtic Church, and that she should be placed in her true position. That evidence will be found in most unexpected places, because the Celtic Church became so identified with the tribe, its habits and customs, that it was both impressed by, and impressed itself on, the tribe and tribal life. It is to be traced in traditions, customs, folk-lore. All these are rapidly vanishing. In the last twenty-five years, more of old Wales has disappeared than had been the case for generations. This process of disappearance is rapidly going on. An effort, a most laudable effort, has been made to publish Welsh manuscripts and the sources of early Welsh history, but these, when published, will be, to a great extent, unintelligible, if the local customs that alone can explain them are allowed to perish unrecorded. It was laid down in a Welsh case,[1] where the construction of some obscure charter, involving questions of local rights, had to be decided, that the safest guide and the best interpreters of such charters were the local usages

[1] Duke of Beaufort *v.* The Mayor of Swansea, 3 Exch., 413.

and customs of the locality. If this rule is observed in Church matters, there may be some hope of explaining many of the riddles which are now unexplained in Welsh archæology, especially ecclesiastical archæology, and of learning more than we now know of the men who stood up for their Church against the strong hand of the Norman barons and the subtler craft of the Latin ecclesiastics. Even if the outcome is to require some parts of the history of the Church in Wales to be rewritten, yet that need not be a matter for regret if the result is to bring out into clearer relief the history of the only independent Church, independent of all foreign control, Papal or Royal, that survived in Western Christendom.

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